

THE
Gospel-Sanctuary:
OR,
GOD'S NAME

RECORDED IN
Places of PUBLICK WORSHIP.

IN WHICH

The CONSECRATION and HOLINESS of
such Places are rationally considered; and the
free and publick Exercise of Religion, sup-
ported upon Natural and Christian Principles.

THE WHOLE

Being designed to recommend and promote a
GOSPEL WORSHIP, in its genuine Purity and
Simplicity.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY PREFACE,
Shewing the true Nature and Grounds of
CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

And a Divine MEDITATION by way of
APPENDIX.

By P. CARDALE.

Locum Sanctum in terris non requiro positum sed in corde.

Orig. Homil. 5. in Levit.

1 Tim. ii. 8. *I will that men pray every where, [ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ,
ubicunque conventus habebuntur, Grot.] lifting up holy Hands.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for JOHN NOON, in *Cheapside*; and sold by T. CADELL,
in *Bristol*; A. TOZER, in *Exeter*; J. ROE, in *Derby*;
R. WHITWORTH, in *Manchester*; and T. WARREN, in
Birmingham. 1740.

160
26

3477 C78





THE P R E F A C E.



T may be expected, (according to custom) that the author of these discourses, should give some account of the *occasion* and *rise* of them, and the reason of their *publication*. This is the usual design of a *preface*, and may in some respects be useful. *Many* are induced by this means to study an argument, or peruse a treatise that might otherwise escape them; and *all* are better able to *judge* of it, when they see the intention and views of the writer.

I HAVE nothing to say of the performance itself; every one *will*, and *ought*, to judge for himself; nor can I hope to satisfy the enquiries, or answer the expectations of all; but I should think myself very happy, if I could gain the *attention* and *candour* of the reader. — This, I am sensible, is a great point, a favourable circumstance, and especially in an age, when so many things are offered to publick view, and the tastes of men are so very different.

There are few, comparatively, that will give themselves the trouble of careful reading, unless the subject is very inviting; and but very few that use an *honest freedom* and *impartiality* in their enquiries after truth: And yet this is necessary on the *reader's* part, as well as the *writer's*; and the only likely way to *receive* or *propagate* useful knowledge. Did mankind more generally study their *bibles*, and pursue the truth, under the influence of such a temper, (free from *personal*, *party-prejudice*, and groundless dislike,) the success, I am persuaded, would be very apparent, and its good effects be many and great: That error and perplexity which hangs upon the mind, would much sooner vanish, and the light of truth break in upon it with greater strength, and evidence: The most valuable and useful writings would *live* in the world, and be better esteemed, as their excellence and worth would the more appear: Nor would every plain and *well-meant* performance be presently lost, or become entirely useless; as is oftentimes the case, where humour and prejudice prevail.

WHAT I would therefore request of all, into whose hands the following sheets may come, is no more than what every fair and honest writer may reasonably expect; and what every sincere and candid enquirer after truth will readily grant; and that is, —a *due* and *careful attention* to the argument itself,—a *disinterested regard* to whatever appears to be truth,—and a *charitable allow-*
ance

P R E F A C E.

v

ance for every mistake, or difference in sentiment or expression.

PERHAPS, the very *occasion*, or *subject* of these discourses, may prejudice some persons against them, as well as invite the attention of others.---They were preached by the stated minister of a congregation in the country, after the first acts of divine service had been performed in a new place of worship amongst the *Protestant Dissenters* *; and were the employment of several *Lord's-days* succeeding. The first exercise or *commencement* of publick service, had been assigned to other hands the week before, and was performed with great acceptance and solemnity.——And, in pursuance of the same design, they are now made *publick*, with several *additional* notes by way of illustration, and a little enlargement of some heads at the close of all.

How far the *subject*, here made choice of, was proper to the *occasion*, or how far justice has been done it, by the author's management, or way of treating it, must be left to others, who have a better *right* to say it; and are much *fitter* to give a judgment. I shall only observe, that, at the desire of some that heard it, and by the approbation and advice of several *ministers*, that have seen and perused the original *manuscripts*, they are now offered to the world in the present form, and submitted to the opinion and

* At Evesham, in *Worcestershire*.

perusal of others, with the author's wish, that, by the blessing of GOD, they may produce some good effect, and the end of their publication be answered.

THEIR general design is comprehended in the *title-page*; and if this has been executed, (as I would hope and trust it has,) with a laudable and good intention, and upon such common and received principles, as all *Christians* cannot but agree in, I shall venture the issue with greater satisfaction of mind, and hope of success; and with this confidence, that no material exception will lie against them, or any just offence be given, however some may happen to think indifferently, or consider and place the same things in another light.

THE argument has been chiefly managed with a practical view, with a design to promote *holiness* and *charity*, a due regard to GOD and his *worship*, and the *essentials* of *Christianity*; and the *principles*, that are laid down, will appear, (I hope,) to have this tendency and effect.—We must first settle right *notions* of GOD and *religion*, in order to a right *worship* and *conduct*. And here the *Christian institution* is our best and surest guide, an excellent rule or standard, highly agreeable to our natural notions of GOD, and the sentiments of wise and virtuous men in all ages.

AND

P R E F A C E.

vii

AND this *should*, (or rather *will*) recommend it the more to all sober and unprejudiced minds.

—The great duties of our religion are all writ (as it were) upon our very natures; and framed with great wisdom, and condescension to our infirmities: And it is an argument for the truth and excellence of its *doctrines*, that they are *according to godliness*: They teach and prescribe nothing but what becomes the perfections of the divine nature, and agrees with those eternal laws, which flow from it; nothing but what has some apparent influence upon a good life, and tends to promote our best interests. And we cannot desire a better argument than this, for the truth of the doctrines of any religion whatever.—*This* is the excellence of the *christian* religion in particular; (to say nothing of its other *credentials*;) and it shines out through the whole scheme, and in its various parts, (in its *worship* and *morals*, and in all its peculiar *principles*;) with a superior lustre and advantage.

IT marks out a worship that is truly rational, and states the grounds of our acceptance, thro' a MEDIATOR, in the most clear and satisfactory manner. We must worship the *one GOD*, through the *one mediator, in spirit, and in truth*. This is what the *gospel* requires, and is equally acceptable in *all places*; the *legal, worldly SANC-TUARY*, and *Jewish rituals*, having been long since abolished. There is no such difference now in *meats and drinks*; no such holiness in *times, places, and actions*; in *utensils, vestments, and the*
A 4
like;

like, as binds upon us the observance and use of them, as formerly. Our shoulders are freed from the burden of the *Mosaic* law; and, in all these things, the only *Christian* rule is, to consult order, decency, and peace, and to avoid every thing as far as may be, that is likely to give offence, or cause divisions.—The religion of the *gospel* asserts our liberty, and abhors compulsion of any sort. As it is founded upon the highest reason, so it is freely submitted to every man's consideration and judgment. As it leaves us at liberty to receive or reject any of its doctrines, just as we discern or not the evidence for them, and are hereby convinced or not, of the truth or importance of them; so it proposes nothing but what, upon examination, appears most agreeable to reason, and carries in it a plain conformity to our most exalted notions of the divine wisdom, holiness, and mercy.

IN short, the cause of *truth, liberty, and love*, without distinction of parties, is the cause of *CHRIST* and his *gospel*; or this is *catholic christianity*: And, to appear for this, upon all occasions, to further and promote it, as much as possible, is the great, the *essential character* and *duty* of every true and consistent *Protestant*: It argues a noble spirit, and is worthy both of the *man* and the *Christian*: Nothing can be more *amiable* in itself, or more *friendly* and *beneficial* to the common interests of mankind. The friends of truth, liberty, and virtue, of all parties, I esteem and honour; and none else, of any

any party whatever.—The true *glory* of the *Christian church*, (which is now dispersed over many parts of the world, where different laws, tempers, customs, and interests prevail,) can by no means consist in what is *peculiar* to this or that *particular church*. It is a very different thing from what many in the world make of it, and is too often mistaken by those that glory in the *Christian name*. — There are too many who affect, or *seem*, to place it in stately buildings and curious paintings, in wealth and grandeur, and such like things, which regale the senses, and amuse the imagination: But external delicacy and pomp, is a mean and contemptible image of it. — There are others, who seem to confine it to this or that *place* of worship, as if the name of an *apostle*, a *saint*, or a *martyr*, and certain consecrated sounds, (which only infatuate and corrupt the mind,) could give any *sanctity* and weight to the place, or worship itself. — And are there not many others too, who appear at least, by their spirit and behaviour, to engross the name, the privileges, and the glory of it, to *themselves*, to their own *party*, *opinion*, or *mode* of worship; as if an exact uniformity of sentiments, or a perfect agreement in every punctilio was essential to the divine favour, and of greater moment and value in the sight of God, than an honest desire to know the truth, and a care to please Him by the virtues of a good life? — The principles of these men are narrow and rigid, and always ORTHODOX; and those who differ from them are fallen into great and danger-

ous

ous errors: Their *church* is the *purest*, if not the *only* one in the world; and their *forms* of worship are all of them *apostolical* and divine: —Whereas, in the redeemer's *catholick* religion, *CHRIST* is *all*, and *in all*; and *we are all in Him*. But so great is the ignorance, and vanity, and unaccountable *bigotry* of some men, that they are ready to confine it wholly to themselves, and can see no beauty, even in *Christianity* itself, unless it be cloathed with their singularities, or appear in their distinguishing drefs.—There are too many, God knows, of this temper and spirit, in almost every church, and under every constitution. But how *absurd* and *uncharitable* is this? —It is plain to me, that such a temper is exactly fitted for *persecution*, if the name was not become so odious. And it should be well considered, by those especially, who call themselves *Protestants*, that this principle, wherever it prevails, or is *authorized*, (as Bishop Burnet observes, when speaking of the *Romish* church,) is a more infallible mark of an *antichristian* church, than all the other characters are of an *infallible* church.

THE *leaven* of persecution, I am afraid, still remains amongst Us, in too great a measure. And it seems owing to *wrong notions* of *christianity*; which have been very much supported and strengthened by custom and prejudice, by a false education, and worldly views. How else could it possibly be, that any particular church, (or single society of christian worshippers,) should
have

have the vanity to imagine, or call itself the true church, exclusive of all other christian churches ? Than which hardly any thing can favour more of *popery*, or is a nearer and more dangerous approach to it. And yet this is the spirit of too many *christian protestant* churches at this day ; and (setting aside persecution in *form*, and in *professed principle*,) is the very *spirit* and *spawn* * of popery itself. Thus the church of *Rome* pretends

* For it is plain, I think, that the supposition of *infallibility*, (which is the only plausible ground, upon which men *can* persecute,) is the very ground upon which these men go. They being themselves infallibly in the *right*, it is not lawful to differ from them, and all that do so must certainly be in the *wrong* ; which is the very principle upon which the church of *Rome* persecutes the *Protestants*. And what other principle indeed *can* men go upon, when they persecute others on the score of religion ?

NOW (not to say here, that it must be very unaccountable for men to *unchurch*, *censure* and *condemn* others for not being of their minds, when they cannot be certain, that they themselves are not mistaken ;) I shall only observe, that when any, who call themselves *Protestants*, go these lengths, it must always be with the greatest absurdity and ill grace ; and the *Papists* herein have the advantage over them, as they can better reconcile their own conduct with their professed principles. If we think this an unjustifiable and cruel part in the *Papists*, it is much more so in *Protestants* ; nor can we too severely censure and condemn it. The *former* act with some consistency when *they* persecute, because they pretend to infallibility ; but when *Protestants* persecute, they are so absurd as to act upon that very principle which they renounce ; and renounce too upon the plainest reason and evidence : For,

AN imposing persecuting power and authority, in matters of religion, (as one observes,) “ God never *has*, He never “ *can* give to any, without giving at the same time a correspondent WISDOM to direct it. Every degree, therefore, of *authority over conscience*, necessarily implies an “ *equal*

pretends to be itself the whole *catbolick church*, exclusive of all other churches, [“ which is the
“ same

“ *equal degree of infallibility* : For GOD, the fountain of
“ *order*, can never AUTHORIZE any man to misguide
“ and seduce his creatures, or to enjoin them what is sin-
“ ful ; but if he has given any man a *greater degree of au-*
“ *thority* in matters of religion, than he has given him of *in-*
“ *fallibility*, that authority may be employed in support of
“ *irreligion*, of error, and vice ; and then men may be ir-
“ religious, be vicious and err, by the authority and in the
“ name of GOD.—Has it not often happened, (says the
“ same author,) nay, is it not impossible but it must always
“ happen, till a spirit of infallibility is poured out upon
“ them, that when men presume to decree *authoritatively* in
“ these matters, they may, they have, they always will e-
“ gregiously *mistake*, and establish *superstition* instead of
“ *decency*, and *error* for *truth* ? Look into all the world,
“ *Spain, Turkey, China*, — What are the great props,
“ upon which the infinite superstitions and errors, which
“ there reign, entirely rest ; are they not the authority and
“ establishment of human law ? — Now, if the civil
“ magistrate, or any *other* person, has authority from GOD
“ to *punish* heresy or error, he must have authority to
“ JUDGE of it, or to DETERMINE what it is. But if
“ the magistrate, &c. in *one* place has this authority, the
“ magistrates and rulers in *all* countries have the same.
“ Whatever then any or all of them shall judge to be heresy,
“ they may, they OUGHT to crush, by *proper penalties*,
“ *i. e.* by such penalties as to them shall seem best ; for of
“ the propriety of penalties, themselves only must be the
“ judges. Hence then it follows, that when the popish
“ queen *Mary* judged her *protestant subjects* guilty of here-
“ sy, and worthy of death ; when *Nero* judged the same
“ of the *Christians* at *Rome* ; and *Pontius Pilate* judged
“ the same of JESUS CHRIST, they had a right, an au-
“ thority to inflict this penalty upon them. — *We*
“ *have a law, and by our law he ought to die*, said the top
“ *priests* and *doctors*, as well as the magistrates of that
“ church. — So then, they fell not by *wicked* ; but by
“ *righteous* and just hands ; and the blood of these martyrs
“ was *innocently* spilt.” See *Dissent. Apology*, lately printed,
p. 14, 15, 41.

NOTHING,

“ same absurdity as for a single *member*, nay, for
 “ a *member* after it hath *cut* itself off from the bo-
 “ dy, presumptuously to call *itself* the *whole bo-*
 “ *dy.*”]—And this is what all churches do in
effect, who make other things necessary to *commu-*
nion and *salvation*, than what our *Saviour* and his
apostles have told us are so: For, whatsoever
 some may pretend, there *is*, and *can* be, but
 one note of the *true* church; *viz.* its teaching
 the same *important* doctrines, which *they* taught;
 and in which all good christians, in all ages, and
 in all countries, are agreed.

OUR *saviour* and his *apostles*, represent religi-
 on in all its parts, as a *reasonable service*; nor is
 there a more amiable and consistent thing in the

NOTHING, I apprehend, can be said more, to shew
 the *danger* and *absurdity* of a doctrine, which has been too
 current in all ages; but was not so clearly and fully made
 out, and exposed formerly, as it has been of late years.—
 And, I may add, that it is no less *antichristian*. The reli-
 gion of *Jesus* disclaims all *dominion* over the *faith* and con-
 sciences of men: He hath expressly forbid us to *call any*
man master upon earth (*i. e.* to acknowledge any authority
 in points of *faith* and religion but *his*,) and hath told us, that
 in things of this nature all we are *brethren*, having equal au-
 thority and power over each other, *i. e.* really none at all.
 —That the civil magistrate may punish immorality,
 and whatever is in its own nature prejudicial to the state, is
 unquestionable: Our bodies and estates, under the restraint
 of general laws, God hath subjected to our earthly rulers,
 who have a power over these, to order and dispose of them,
 as the common civil good shall require; but, that they
 have any right to prescribe what religion the people shall
 chuse, or to punish them for differing from them in such
 matters, has not yet been made to appear.—As men and
Christians, we claim their *protection* in the exercise of our
natural and *religious liberties*, and are thankful for every
 instance and degree of favour or indulgence.

world,

world, than the *christian* religion, as it stands in the writings of the *new testament*, and was exemplified in the *worship* and practice of the first christians. Its *observances* are few and easy; its *doctrines* and *rules*, and the *discoveries* it makes, are such as suit the *reason* and the *wants* of all men: And what deserves observation is, its *principal, leading truths*, and those of the greatest *consequence*, are sufficiently *plain*, and very *clearly revealed*, and what the understanding and reason of mankind in general does readily *consent* to, and *approve* of. — And accordingly we find, that though GOD hath formed men with different capacities, as well as different features; and there will consequently be different opinions, and different ways of thinking, even in *religious* matters; yet *all* agree in the belief of those *plain articles*, which the christian revelation hath made *necessary* and *essential*, and about which there would have been little or no dispute, had it not been for the *cunning craftiness* of some, and the intemperate zeal of others.

AND so long as they agree in *these things*, what necessity is there for any other articles of religion? Or, how can the *imposition* of them ever answer or bring about the end proposed, *viz.* an *unity of faith* and *opinion*? Does it appear, that any other, *besides* THESE, have an *immediate* and *powerful* influence upon the mind; or that a general *assent* to them would tend to *promote* the *substantial virtues* of the christian life? — It is plain, they are not necessary to *salvation*; and when articles are required without *necessity*, subscription to them

them can by no means, with any propriety, be required as *necessary*. This seems to be indisputably plain. And it is no less evident, that they are ineffectual to promote *unity* [or *uniformity* :] For,——how is it possible that all persons should *believe* or *unite* in them, when they have no foundation but what is *uncertain* and precarious; such as *synods* and *councils*, and the *traditions* of fallible men? It is possible, indeed, that some may be brought to *subscribe* them, without *faith* or *conviction* : But this is what no *honest* and *considerate* man can do ; and therefore, it can be no commendation or credit to any church to insist upon it.

THE truth is,——every man who hath rational faculties, and a right to use them, hath an unquestionable right to judge for himself in matters of religion. The common people are either incapable of religion, or else must chuse and understand it for themselves. There is no *visible judge* of controversies ; and differences in opinion are unavoidable. And therefore the christian religion every where *supposes* and *provides* for such differences * ; taking it for granted, that they cannot in their own nature be displeasing to God, or hurtful to *any* that *sincerely love* and *seek* the truth, farther than they rise up to *angry* controversy, or, (by an undue management,) alienate and weaken that brotherly *love* and *unity* †, which the sacred writings so frequently
and

* Rom. xiv. 1, 4, 5. xvi. 1. Eph. iv. 3.

† There is a vast difference betwixt *unity* and *uniformity* :
The

and strongly inculcate, and which all Christians should cultivate one towards another.——“ So
 “ long as God hath formed the understandings
 “ of men so differently, with respect to clear-
 “ nels, strength and compass, (as a late writer
 “ hath observed,) a *diversity* of opinions can be
 “ neither any *disgrace* to the Christian church,
 “ nor inconsistent with the *peace* * of it. If it is
 “ no

The one is more *easy* to be obtained, and much more *worth* the obtaining than the other. —— *Schism* is an offence against *love*; and where there is most *love*, there is least *schism*; but where there is the most *envy*, and *hatred*, and *persecution*, there is the most flagrant and exalted *schism*.

—— A person does not, in the least, break the *unity* of CHRIST's church, barely by not uniting with this or the other *particular* church, which is owned to be but a *frame*, or *constitution of men*. —— “ If terms, not *Christian*, are
 “ required as necessary to our admission to any *communion* or
 “ church, we are humbly bold to say, that communion or
 “ church is not *Christian*: It is a church or society founded upon other principles, and formed upon another plan
 “ than that of JESUS CHRIST: And therefore the separating from that, is no separation at all from the church
 “ of *Christ*.” —— *Schism*, of consequence, is a different thing from what many persons make of it: The *cause* and the *guilt* of it must be elsewhere; and the *odious charge* be otherwise fixed, and made out, than it has been.

* THE remark of a *foreigner* may not be impertinent here. —— “ *England*, says he, is properly the country of
 “ *Seētariſts*. An *Englishman*, as one to whom liberty is natural, may go to Heaven his own way. If one religion
 “ only were allowed in *England*, the government would
 “ very possibly become arbitrary; if there were but two,
 “ the people would cut one another's throats; but as there
 “ are such a multitude, they all live happy, and in peace.” See M. de *Voltaire's* letters on the *English* nation. Let. V, VI. —— What some have therefore called the *endemic* distemper of this *island*, is no such great or real evil as
 some

“ no dishonour to men that they *are* men, it
 “ is no dishonour to them that they should dis-
 some may think, since it turns so much to the advantage
 of the nation in general.

“ It is a *narrowness* of spirit, on *all sides*, (as one ob-
 “ serves,) that has undoubtedly been the principal occasion
 “ of our miseries and confusions. — We have need of more
 “ generous remedies than what have yet been made use
 “ of in our case. It is neither *declarations of indulgence*,
 “ nor *acts of comprehension*, such as have yet been practised
 “ or projected amongst us, that can do the work. The
 “ first will but palliate, the second encrease our evil. Ab-
 “ solute liberty, just and true liberty, equal and impartial
 “ liberty, is the thing that we stand in need of.” See pref.
 to *Lock's* letter of *toleration*. — I'll put the case here ; whe-
 ther this is not that liberty, which the *Christian* religion
commands, which the *protestant* religion *supposes* in its own
 nature, and which the *policy* of the *best* government *requires*,
 in order to its greater safety, ornament, and strength ?

“ THE *Christians*, (says Dr. *Burnet*,) during the first
 “ ages, declared highly against all cruelty, on account of a
 “ difference of persuasion in matters of *religion* : And tho'
 “ their interest naturally led them to this, yet we pass a ve-
 “ ry hard judgment on those times, if we think that they
 “ were only of that mind, because the power was then in
 “ the hands of their enemies. When the *empire* turned
 “ *Christian*, the very *heathen worship* was not only tolerated
 “ for above a whole age together, but the *heathens* them-
 “ selves continued to be in the chief employments of the *em-*
 “ *pire* : And it is pleasant to see, how the *heathens* that had
 “ long persecuted the *Christians*, (and that had contrived
 “ the severest of all the persecutions under *Julian*,) saw
 “ the state of things no sooner altered, than they began to
 “ employ all their eloquence in the behalf of *toleration* ; as
 “ liberty of conscience had been an essential right of man-
 “ kind, from which they ought never to be cut off : And
 “ they carried this so far, as to pretend, that a difference
 “ in *religion* tends more to the honour of God, than an
 “ uniformity in it could do.” See *Burnet's* preface to *Lac-*
tantius on the death of the *primitive persecutors*, p. 27; 8.
 and the *Edict*. of *Constantine* and *Licinius*, book, *sect.* *xlvi.*
 p. 156.

“fer from each other; and unless christianity
 “intended to make us *more than men*, a diverfi-
 “ty of opinions can be no dishonour to us as
 “Christians.” The terms of church-unity, (as
 laid down in the gospel,) are easy, plain, and un-
 questionable, and not clogged with scruples.
 And, “if nothing more was made necessary to
 “communion and salvation, than what the ori-
 “ginal records of christianity have made so, the
 “*true* unity of faith in all *essentials* would be
 “fully preserved: And in other things in which
 “Christians might differ, they would have oc-
 “casion for the exercise of *mutual charity* and
 “brotherly affection, which would be the great
 “ornament, and the *most solid security* of the
 “peace of the christian church.”

It has been observed, (and I think very justly,) that,
 “when one party has a power of oppressing another, heats
 “and animosities on both sides are unavoidable. This is
 “too much our case: [see Mr. *Ja. Pierce’s* letter to Dr.
 “*Snape*, p. 18.] *tory-magistrates* and *parish-officers* think
 “they have a right to oppress their neighbours, who differ
 “from them, and they do it to purpose in many cases:
 “But if every man’s right to chuse his religion was estab-
 “lished by law, and all discouragements were removed,
 “[i. e. if no *religious societies* amongst us had any other en-
 “couragement from the state, but that of *protection*,] eve-
 “ry one would live quietly, without envying his neigh-
 “bour the right he enjoys himself. This is the happiness
 “of the *Dutch* constitution; neighbours quarrel not a-
 “mongst them for their differing sentiments in religion:
 “And were we so happy as to be set upon a like, or better
 “footing, there would be an end of those animosities which
 “have so often threatened us with ruin: We should not
 “then be exposed to the insults of mobs; nor would the
 “*senseless* multitude pretend to dictate to others in matters
 “of religion.”

IT is always an ill sign, when men value themselves upon their own *peculiarities*, and lesser marks of distinction, more than *the great things* of the divine law, or their common christianity; when, like the *Pharisees*, the *Jewish bigots* of old, they lay greater stress upon circumstance and accident, than the life and substance of religion; and are more solicitous to make a *proselyte*, and enlarge their own enclosure, than to serve the interest of the greatest truth, or promote the common good. A few plain articles are enough to make us truly religious and virtuous, even upon the *christian* scheme: And it is of ill consequence to the christian world, for people to think, that there is more of religion in what they *believe*, than in what they *are* and *do*; in a set of notions, and turn of mind and opinion, than in the frame of the soul, and the course of life. We should always remember, that *knowledge* and *practice*, how much soever we may differ in our notions of them, are in the christian religion but two terms importing the same thing *: Or, in other words, that the great articles of our *creed* are so many arguments and reasons, motives and encouragements, to a good life; and that, where they have not this effect, we receive the *gospel*, *the grace of GOD*, *in vain*.

* 1 John ii. 4. John xiii. 17.

Now, *Christians*, as such, would do well to consider, that one eminent branch or precept of this gospel is *charity*, (*charity* in respect to other men's opinions, and our own temper and conduct towards them that differ from us,) and that the *peculiar* doctrines of christianity do, in the strongest manner, recommend and enforce it. — All *uncharitableness* is *unrighteousness* : It is *iniquity* ; or a manifest breach of the *gospel rule*, which is a rule of *equity*, and contrary to the very spirit and design of it. — *Meekness* and *charity*, are such eminent ingredients in the *christian* religion, that our saviour himself hath made them the *characters*, by which his *disciples* may be every where known ; and this spirit is so diffused through the writings of the *New-Testament*, that, how hard soever it may be, to understand some of the *other* passages that are in them, yet there is no ambiguity at all in *these*. — It deserves observation, that whilst the church of *Corinth* was almost rent asunder by a variety of opinions, and by the different parties that followed the several teachers that had been amongst them ; St. *Paul*, in his *epistles*, does not much enter into the grounds of their disputes, but recommends *love* and *charity* to them, in such strong and tender terms, as plainly shew how much he himself was inflamed while he wrote them ; and he is carried into all the raptures of a divine eloquence, that so transporting a subject could inspire. — Would men but once *agree* to differ, or differ *peaceably*, how happy would it be for the christian world !

Did

Did they once put in practice that important rule [*of doing as they would be done by,*] it would be hard to conjecture what they could quarrel about. The practice of this one rule, according to its just extent, would be a happy mean of the best and purest *reformation* that the world was ever yet acquainted with, and the likeliest expedient for healing all our unhappy divisions.—But when professed christians, in open defiance of this noble *maxim*, grow *angry* with those that differ from them, call in question their *honesty*, deny them the rights of *common humanity*, and are for propagating what they call *truths* in the way of the *Alcoran*, not of the *bible*; this is the bane of *christianity*, and inconsistent with all *true religion*: Or, this is that *bitter zeal*, (as the *apostle* truly describes it,) which is *earthly*, *sensual*, and *devilish*, and ought never to have a *place*, or a *name*, amongst *Christians*, amongst *Protestants*.

To conclude this long preface.—The protestant *temper*, joined with protestant *principles*, must be the *best*, and the *only* remedy of all our disorders. To this purpose, I shall recite the following passage, and leave it with the reader.

—“ A protestant, if he will be consistent with
 “ himself,) must be ready to *allow* another that
 “ *liberty*, which, as a *Protestant*, he claims to
 “ himself; that is, to reform as he can best un-
 “ derstand the scriptures: Not be angry with
 “ another for differing from him; but believe
 “ his neighbour to have as much right to the *li-*
 “ *berty* of his conscience, as he hath to his own.

“ Honest

“ Honest men, with such Protestant charity,
“ would soon agree in all things *necessary*: And
“ the *small* differences, which might remain
“ amongst them, would do little harm to them-
“ selves, no hurt at all to the general interest of
“ the protestant cause, and be every way consist-
“ ent with the well being both of *church* and
“ *state* *.”

* See *occasional papers* for the year 1716. Numb. II. p. 1

29 MR 59



B O O K S

BOOKS Sold by JOHN NOON, at
the *White - Hart*, near *Mercer's-
Chapel*, in *Cheapside*.

I. **F**UNERAL discourses : In two parts. Con-
taining, 1. Consolations on the death of
our friends. 2. Preparations for our own death.

II. The case of Sodom and Gomorrah, and
of the Israelites in the wilderness, practically
considered. In two discourses. Price 1 s. Both
by WILLIAM HARRIS, D. D.

III. A paraphrase and notes on the revelation
of St. John ; with large historical observations,
and a preface, giving an account of the design
and use of this book ; with a scheme and order
of the prophecies. By MOSES LOWMAN. Price
9 s.

IV. An essay towards explaining the history
and revelation of scripture in their several peri-
ods. To which is added, a dissertation on the
fall of man. By JEREMIAH HUNT, D. D.
Price 4 s.

V. A paraphrase and critical commentary on
the prophecy of Joel. By SAMUEL CHANDLER.
Price 4 s.

VI. Some thoughts upon the grounds of man's
expectation of a future state, from the principles
of reason. Drawn up for the use of a gentleman
who doubted whether there really was any
thing, we have either to fear, or to hope for
beyond this present life.

VII. Remarks on Mr. *Thomas Chubb's*
true gospel, and remarks on his vindication
of his true gospel of Jesus Christ, in the
following order ; Sect. 1. Remarks on his proof
of

BOOKS Sold by J. NOON.

of Elias's prayer being an angry prayer, from its suitability to the Jewish dispensation, which he says, seems at least, to countenance persecution.

Sect. 2. On his scheme as destructive of the credit of the sacred writers. His true gospel but a part of the true gospel. The divine inspiration of the sacred writers supported. Sect. 3. His vindication of his short dissertation on providence considered. Sect 4. An examination of his new scheme of prayer; which scheme is shewn to be evidently formed upon his plan of providence, and contradictory to his notion of prayer in his tracts, to which he refers. These three by C. FLEMING.

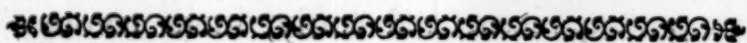
VIII. The history of the first planting the christian religion, taken from the apostles and their epistles: Together with the remarkable facts of the Jewish and Roman history which affected the christians within this period. In two vols. 4to. With an appendix, to prove that St. Luke wrote the acts of the apostles; and to shew, that if the ACTS contain a true history, christianity must be true. By GEO. BENSON.

IX. A dissertation on 2 Theff. ii. 1--12. in which is shown; that the bishop of *Rome* is the man of sin: That the whole prophecy is applicable to him, and his adherents, and to them alone. Nor can we, at this day, describe the apostacy of the church of *Rome*, in a more concise and lively manner, than the apostle has done in that short and remarkable prophecy.



S E R M O N I.

The Gospel Sanctuary : Or,
G O D's Name recorded in
Places of Publick Worship.



E X O D. XX. 24.

— *In all places where I record my
name, I will come unto thee, and I
will blefs thee.*



IT is, *my friends*, of the greatest
importance to secure a gracious
and divine presence with us in
our religious assemblies: It is a
great privilege to meet with
G O D, and to obtain blessings
from Him, when we come together in any
place to worship Him; and this is what we
should be solicitous for, above all things else;
otherwise our services will be vain and unpro-
fitable, and it will signify little for us to set
B apart

apart times and places for publick worship. What is one place, one spot of ground more than another? Or, wherein are we the better for any such circumstance, without the *Shechinah*, the Ark of GOD with us, or something equivalent to it? I persuade myself, there is no serious and thoughtful person here, but will readily fall in with me in such sentiments as these; and that there is no peculiar distinction, or eminence in any place of worship, as such, but what is derived from hence; I mean, from a Divine presence and power manifested in it. Places in themselves may differ; some may be more magnificent and costly, more commodious, or more decent than others; but still, I say, *as places of worship*, they are all alike in point of acceptance; GOD may be equally served here, or there; and the only difference or excellence there is, or can be in them, must arise either from the purity of the worshippers, and of the worship performed in them; or, as I rather chuse to express it, (and which amounts to the same thing,) from those marks of the Divine presence and favour which are therein exhibited.

IN these respects, I grant, there *may* be a difference: The influence and benediction of heaven may be more considerable in one place than in another.—And this is the thing, now, that we are chiefly concerned about; and we ought to be so, upon this occasion especially, when we are setting apart this house to the
more

more immediate and solemn uses of publick worship: It is this that must make and constitute an holy people, an happy society, let them meet together in what place they will: And give me leave to say, that if the gracious, efficacious presence, and blessing of GOD may be afforded here, this will fill and adorn the house to greater advantage, and be in itself a greater glory than the cloud, the altar, or the mercy-seat were in the tabernacle and temple of old: If we can but secure this; as we cannot *expect*, so we need not *desire* any thing further. And what, indeed, is any place of worship without this, let it be ever so splendid and costly, or ever so full of ornament and glory in other respects? What were the tabernacle or temple in antient times, had it not been for the Ark of GOD, and the *symbols* of his presence in those places? And what are any houses or places of worship now, without his gracious presence in them? What is a parish church, or stately cathedral? Or, what is a private chamber, meeting-house or *conventicle*, (as some love to speak, in way of reproach*?) the *real* difference is as nothing: What, I say, are all, or any of these, unless a people meet with GOD there? Or, in other words, unless

B 2

they

* Tho' it is certain, that the word heretofore was so far from being considered as a term of reproach and infamy, that Christians themselves called their own churches by the name of *conventicula*: And if it had a *bad* sense in those early ages, (when applied to Christian assemblies,) it was only among *Heathens* and *persecutors*. V. Bingham's *Antiq.* vol. i. book viii.

they are serious, humble, peaceable, conscientious worshipers, and can claim the promise of G O D's presence and blessing with them?

T H E plain' truth is, if we can but hear Christ and his salvation preached, Gospel truth and duty clearly explained and stated, and the great things of religion pressed upon the heart and conscience, with life and seriousness; it matters little in what place we hear these things, whether it be at *Ephratah*, or in the *fields of the wood*; upon a mountain, or in the wilderness, or in a mean and homely cottage. Still the word of the Lord is precious, and the place itself can be no bar to the Divine promise, or to any more favourable tokens of a Divine presence. " May I in all my religious services be " found sincere and upright with G O D, and " then, wheresoever I pay my homage to Him, " I make no question but I shall be accepted." And I must observe here, that as no place of worship is of much significancy or account without the indwelling presence and grace of G O D, so it is our privilege and comfort that his gracious presence is promised and vouchsafed to every place where he is worshiped in sincerity and truth. — *In all places where I record my name, &c.*

T H A T the words are very applicable to my present design, and suitable to the occasion, will appear, I hope, with sufficient evidence, when I have gone thro' the following enquiries,

enquiries, which I shall propose and consider a little distinctly. As,

I. WHAT is meant here by the *name* of GOD.

II. WHEN GOD may be said to record his name in any place, and how this is to be understood: This will lead us

III. To explain the promise itself; that in every such place GOD will come to his people, and will bless them: And then

IV. IT may be proper to shew, upon what basis or foundation it is, that all religious assemblies now, may expect and hope for the presence and blessing of GOD with them, in one place as well as another.

I. IT will be proper to enquire into the NAME of GOD, and shew what is here meant by it. The word has a very extensive meaning, and is capable of various senses, and perhaps there is no single phrase in scripture that has more different ideas affixed to it. I shall take the more notice of it here, as it will direct and assist us in our further enquiries into this subject. What is more directly and primarily intended by it, is the *presence* of GOD, or some *visible token*, or *illustrious symbol* of it; and to this sense the *Chaldee* paraphrase renders the words; *viz.* in every place where I shall make my

glory, (that is, the *Shechinah* *) to dwell, I will send my blessing, and I will bless thee. This seems to be the meaning here; for the *Ark*, that other memorial of God's presence with them, was not yet made. Now this *Shechinah*, this visible glorious Majesty, might be called the *name* of God more emphatically, because thereby he distinguished or made himself known in a peculiar manner to his antient people. It was something of this kind, no doubt, that appeared to *Adam* † and the succeeding patriarchs: It was this that attended the *Israelites* in their march out of *Egypt*, and in their travels thro' the wilderness: It was this that appeared at the promulgation of the law on mount *Sinai* for six days together; that waited upon the ark and tabernacle, and afterwards filled the house at the dedication of the temple. And, I add, that this glorious presence or manifestation, where-ever it was made, was always accounted so sure a token of the *Divinity* in that place, that it is sometimes put to signify the very presence or being of God himself, as in the 21st verse of this chapter, and in other places ‡. It is sufficient to observe, that the name of God was said to be there, *eminently*, where he was present after a singular and

* Thus the *Jews* were wont to call that body of light or bright cloud in which God dwelt between the cherubim; *Psal.* lxxx. 1. And this is what *St. Paul* calls the *Glory* of that people; *Rom.* ix. 4.

† *Gen.* ii. 15. ‡ *Exod.* xxxiii. 14, 15. *Psal.* xcv. 2.

and extraordinary manner || ; or, it frequently signifies his *majestic visible presence*.

BUT there are other things must come into our account of this matter, and are a farther explanation of it: By the *name of GOD* is more generally meant in scripture any thing whereby he maketh himself, or his mind and will, known to us.—Thus the *titles and attributes* of GOD, for instance, are a declaration of what He is: Not that we can come by any of his names, to a perfect and thorough knowledge of Him*; but these are the proximate, yea, the nearest account we have of Him; or they describe and explain his nature to us, so far as we are concerned, or able to know it at present; and they go to compose or make up that glorious name, by which he would be known to the children of men: Thus GOD is said to *proclaim* his *name* before *Moses*, when he styles himself, *The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, &c.* †

AGAIN, His *worship and ordinances* in the general may be called his name; and in this sense the word is sometimes used ‡. This is

B 4

one

|| 1 Kings viii. 16. * Job xi. 7. † Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6, 7. ‡ Mal. i. 5, 7, 8, 11. And when it is said, that *Solomon* should build a house for *his name*, the meaning is, for his worship and honour; 2 Sam. vii. 13. To chuse

one of those ways, amongst others, in which GOD makes himself *known* to us ; and he is commonly known best of all, in his own house and family, and amongst his servants : Here he receives their homage, and distributes his favours and blessings, and holds a more stated and delightful intercourse with them.

HIS *word* also is his name, and is very fitly so called ; more particularly, the *gospel*, or that revelation which he hath made of himself by *Jesus Christ* : So the word is used, *Acts ix. 15.* where *St. Paul* is called a *chosen vessel to bear the name*, i. e. the *gospel of Jesus Christ before Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Israel*. It is hereby, principally, that he makes himself known amongst us at this day : He reveals himself in the *word* more than he does in the *world* ; and to this sense we may fitly apply those words of the Psalmist, *Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name* *. GOD has no where magnified his wisdom and righteousness, his compassion and grace, or made any of his moral attributes so illustrious, as in the *gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This is a principal token of his presence ; a plain intimation or proof of his friendly and gracious regards to any people where it comes †. Was the ark of GOD, the
ark

chuse it for a place of *sacrifice*, and to put his *name* there, are phrases pretty much equivalent ; *Deut. xii. 5.* Compare *2 Chron. vii. 12.*

* Psal. cxxxviii. 2.

† Psal. cxlviii. 19, 20.

ark of the covenant, called the *glory* † of *Israel*? It was so, no doubt, as it contained, amongst other things, the two *tables of the law*, which were articles of the covenant betwixt *GOD* and his people: To them *pertained the glory* * in this sense: And yet we have a brighter part of his name amongst *us*; something that *excelleth*, and is more glorious still, even the *New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; or, that new and gracious covenant which *GOD* hath made with all believers thro' his Son. He has here made the brightest discoveries of himself to us, and wrote his name in the most clear and legible characters.

OR, if we enquire further what the name of *GOD* means, our Saviour himself will tell us; that it is the *doctrine and way of salvation*, or the counsel and grace of *GOD* concerning our redemption, as he himself hath taught and explained that matter in the Gospels: For this is what he means, when he says, *John* xvii. 6. *I have manifested thy NAME to the men which thou gavest me out of the world: Thy name, i. e. thy gospel*, as it reveals and contains the great doctrines of grace and salvation; and to this sense the same word is used in the 26th verse. So that by the name of *GOD* now we are principally to understand the *gospel*; and especially where this is entertained, and followed with its *proper and genuine effects*: For these

† 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22.

* Rom. ix. 4.

these must be taken in, (as I shall hereafter shew,) in order to explain and complete the notion of GOD's recording his name in any place.

IT is sufficient to remark at present, that the name of GOD is sometimes used in this sense; I mean, for his *works of power and grace*: And so, I apprehend, the word may be taken with a great deal of propriety, and without any inconvenience, *i. e.* for the happy effects of his word and spirit in the *church*, as well as the great effects of his power and providence in the *world*. See *Psal. lxxvi. 1. In Judah GOD is known; his name is great in Israel: i. e.* the tokens of his presence and power, and the exercise of a particular providence over that people, were especially seen in the tabernacle and temple of old, as the following verses fully shew. — It is by his works ultimately that he best explains himself, and more clearly unfolds his other attributes, and all the names and titles he any where assumes; *That thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare; Psal. lxxv. 1.*

UPON the whole, it is to be observed, that the gospel of Christ, with its glorious effects, is the brightest name, or character, by which he is known in the Christian church. And, if we carry these remarks along with us, they will throw considerable light upon the other phrase, and assist us in our next enquiry.

II. WHEN

II. WHEN GOD may be said to *record* his name in any place, and how this is to be understood. *In all places where I record my name, &c.*

THIS plainly relates to places of *worship*, or *sacrifice*; and so the sense, in general, is, “ In every place where I exhibit myself to be “ worshiped and honoured; or, where-ever I “ cause my name to be known or remembered, “ by giving any particular memorial or token “ of my presence, I will come unto thee, and “ I will bless thee.” I shall set the matter in a twofold light, agreeably to what was noted under the former head: *v. g.* GOD may be said to record his name in any place; either in a *visible* and *extraordinary* manner, and with *more grandeur* and *solemnity*; or else, in a manner that is *less sensible* and *conspicuous*, tho’ *more common* and *ordinary*; as really and truly, tho’ not so magnificently.—I shall explain the matter both ways.

§ I. GOD may be said to record his name in a higher, a more sublime and eminent sense. This was peculiar to former times, and to another dispensation and state of things. There was a great deal of strictness and *decorum* observed, as to places and modes of worship formerly, as well as greater magnificence and show, to strike and regale the senses. And as this was peculiar to the first ages, and to the
Jews

Jews especially, (who lived under a *Theocracy*, which indulged them in these things, and required a great many ceremonial observances;) the phrase in my text must be interpreted accordingly. And, to this purpose, I would take notice of the following things.

(1.) GOD may be said to record his name in any place, more *eminently*, when he himself *appoints* and *chuses* the place of worship, or *draws the model* and *design* of it. Thus it was with the *Israelites* at this time, in their wilderness-state more especially; and afterwards, till synagogues and houses of worship were dispersed up and down in the land.

As to the particular place or spot of ground, it appears that GOD himself did always, or for the most part, determine that circumstance. *An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me, (as in the former clause of this verse,) and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, &c.* it follows, *in all places, (i. e. in all such places as I shall mark out for this purpose, by some token, or symbol, signifying that I would be worshiped there,) I will come unto thee, &c.* — Tho' all places *in themselves* were alike, yet it was not any place, that *they* should chuse, to which the promise and blessing was annexed; but the meaning is, in all such places as I shall appoint for this purpose, whether in the wilderness, or in *Canaan*: And there was a very particular and
express

express order in this case, as you may see, *Deut. xii. 5, 11, 13, 14.*

AND as *places* for offering sacrifice were appointed and marked out by GOD himself, so were those two publick *structures* or *buildings* afterwards, the tabernacle and temple. It was He that *appointed* the *exact form* and model of both *, and might therefore be said in a more eminent sense to *record* his *name* in those places. — When GOD brought the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt* into the wilderness, he manifested himself unto them in a very peculiar manner, cloathing himself with light, whereby he became visible to the camp; and it is probable that this light did then determine the times and places for offering sacrifice; or, his *glorious* presence, where-ever it rested, seems to have been a token of his *gracious* presence with them, and of his readiness to accept their *offerings* in those places. — Sometimes he might only *nominate* the place, or give some particular instruction or order where it should be. — Or else, leaving this to their own choice, he might, by some visible token of his accepting their sacrifices, signify † his
his

* *Vide* Exod. xxv. 10, — 40. xxvi. 30. also 1 Chron. xxvii. 11, 12, 13, 19.

† This was frequently done by fire from heaven, which consumed the sacrifices: GOD afforded this testimony of his approbation when the tabernacle was erected, and *Aaron* consecrated, *Lev. ix. 24.* And it was by the same token, as some think, that he made choice of *Shiloh*, when the taber-

his particular regard and desire to one place more than another. And both these seem to have been the case with respect to mount *Zion*, or the house in which G O D chose, out of all the families of *Israel*, to put his name there * ; for we are told expressly, that when he first made choice of this place, an angel commanded the prophet *Gad* to tell *David*, he should set up an altar in *such a place, the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite* ; and there G O D answered him by fire from heaven †, or thus approved and consecrated the altar, when it was built, as he afterwards did the temple, which was erected in the very same place ||.

N O W it is certain we are not to expect that G O D should thus record his name amongst us, by appointing or chusing out places of worship, in any such way and manner as this ; it being left to human prudence to chuse what places may

tabernacle was set up in that place, where it continued longer than in any other. It seems, however, to have been usual with G O D in former times, thus to testify a favourable regard to the offerings of good men in *any* place. Some of the *Jewish* writers tell us, that the sacrifices of *Abel*, of *Noah*, and of *Abraham*, when they first dedicated altars, were thus declared to be acceptable. It is plain that he thus testified his acceptance of *Gideon's* sacrifice : And the same miraculous token was shewn, when *Elijah* contested with the priests of *Baal*, 1 *Kings* xviii. And this was always allowed to be the highest token of G O D's gracious acceptance of any sacrifice, or his regard to any place.

* 2 *Kings* xxi. 7.

† 1 *Chron.* xxi. 18, 26.

|| 2 *Chron.* vii. 1.

may be most convenient. And the like may be said,

(2.) WHEN any such place is *consecrated* or *set apart* by particular *rites* and *ceremonies*, according to his own appointment. This also was peculiar to the tabernacle and temple of old; nor does he any where record his name in this sense amongst us. As those places were appointed for holy uses, by the special and express command of GOD himself; so it was by his order that they were consecrated after a particular manner, and with various purifying rites and oblations. Thus the *tabernacle* is said to be *anointed* and *sanctified*, the *altar*, the *instruments*, and all the vessels of it*. And so was the temple afterwards, by musick of various kinds, by a feast of seven days, and a vast number of sacrifices†. — Now it is certain there is no such manner and form of consecration as this under the gospel; nor is there any institution or appointment now that makes this, or any other mode of consecration necessary; this being extraordinary, and peculiar to the circumstances of the church in those earlier ages. And the same remark will hold, as to the third and last thing I shall mention under this head, namely,

(3.) GOD may be said to record his name thus eminently in any place, when he *takes*
the

* Numb. vii. 1. Exod. xl. 10, &c. † 2 Chron. vi. vii.

the possession of it, and *shews his approbation* in some extraordinary and *visible* manner. Thus the glory of the LORD is said to have filled the tabernacle*, and afterwards the temple†, as soon as all other preparation and ceremony was over. The cloud of glory that visibly descended upon that occasion, did in the most lively and awful manner represent, his *taking possession* of those places: And there he was afterwards said to *dwell*, in the shining cloud, or body of light, *between the cherubims* ||; i. e. there he dwelt after a more sensible and glorious manner, and with greater magnificence; and especially when the ark was brought from *Kirjath-jearim* to the *new tabernacle* in mount *Zion*, and afterwards fixed in the temple: There he dwelt more magnificently than he had done before; was more royally attended, and solemnly served: There *David* appointed, a little before he died, the *Priests* and *Levites*, in their courses, constantly to wait upon him, with songs and instruments of musick; and settled all other officers belonging to a *house*, and suitable to the greatness of the Majesty that dwelt there ‡.

THE temple was GOD's *mansion-house* on earth, as I may call it, in which there was plenty of meat and provision, with various utensils and offices, to complete the idea of an

* Exod. xl. 34. † 1 Kings viii. 11. 2 Chron. v. 13. vii. 1. || Exod. xxv. 8. ‡ 1 Chron. xxiii. 4, 5, 6.

an house: But it was principally the ark, (in which there was a copious display of the *Shechinah*, or Divine presence,) that made it the house of G O D eminently speaking: This was called his *habitation* or dwelling in a peculiar sense*, and was a remarkable type† of *Christ*, the true *Shechinah* or glory of G O D, who afterwards tabernacled in human flesh.

AND I will only add, that the manner of consecration was very extraordinary, and of the highest kind: The L O R D himself *hallowed* the house, (*when Solomon had made an end of praying,*) both by fire from heaven, which consumed the *burnt-offering, and the sacrifices*; and by a *cloud of glory*, which filled the house, and signified his taking the possession of it‡. And besides these two demonstrations, (that he would be ever present in that place to hear the prayers, and accept the worship that should be performed in it,) we are also told, that the L O R D appeared to *Solomon by Night*, assuring him that his prayer was heard, and that he had *chosen* that very PLACE for a house of sacrifice to himself ||.

N o w

* 2 Sam. xv. 25.

† Tho' it doth not appear to be an emblem designed to shadow out Christ; yet, as *Dr. Lightfoot* expresseth it, it is the most pregnant and proper resemblance of our Saviour, in whom G O D dwelleth among men. *The Temple, ch. xv. §. 4.*

‡ 2 Chron. vii. 1.

|| *Ibid.* ver. 12.

N O W these, and such like circumstances, were a token of G O D's peculiar regard to that place ; and he might be said to record his name there after an *extraordinary* manner, by such *extraordinary* manifestations as these. But the phrase *may* be taken in another sense, if we apply it to our own case, and to the state and circumstances of things under the gospel. I will therefore observe farther,

§. 2. G O D may be said to record his name in a manner that is *less sensible and conspicuous*, tho' *more common and ordinary* ; as *really and truly*, tho' not so *magnificently*. And thus it is now under the Christian state and worship. Wheresoever *prayers* are offered, the *word* is preached, and divine *ordinances* are administered according to the appointment of our blessed *Lord*, there G O D's name is recorded.

O R, his *worship* in *general*, may be called his name, as I before hinted ; and so the sense is, " In all places, where publick worship is performed, you may depend upon my presence and benediction." Now it is certain, divine worship may be celebrated in other places, as well as where the ark of G O D, and his glorious presence was manifested formerly : We may have the pure and acceptable worship of G O D amongst *us* as well as the *Jews*, tho' we have not such visible tokens of his presence, as the *pillar of cloud and fire* was in the wilderness, or as the ark with its glorious train and
retinue

retinue in the tabernacle and the temple. Were the divine oracles and counsels delivered, and sacrifices offered in those places; so it is in effect at this day, where the gospel is preached, and the spiritual sacrifices (of prayer and praise) are offered to GOD thro' Jesus Christ.—And, to this sense, the words may be fairly interpreted; for by the name of GOD, according to some, is here meant no more than the *sacrifices* and *altars* before-mentioned; these being so many rites of remembrance, whereby the name of GOD was commemorated or recorded, and his covenant with men testified and renewed*: And it deserves observation, that the word [*zacar*] signifies not only to remember or record, but to worship, and to perform † sacred offices; and where-ever this is publicly done, whether in the *Jewish* or *Christian* form, and with a suitable solemnity and seriousness of spirit, there GOD may be said to record his name.

AND so we may say, as to the word of GOD, where this is *preached*, or explained,
in

* *Vide* Pat. in loco.

† Sciendum est, vocem illam, — non tantum *recordandi* & *remiscendi*, sed & *colendi*, *officium sacrum præstandi*, & (in Hiphil in primis,) *celebrandi*, significatum antiquitus habuisse. Eo sensu occurrit *Isa.* lxvi. 3. 1 *Paral.* xvi. 4. And, accordingly, it is used (with its derivatives,) in the following places, for any object, monument, or place of worship. *Lev.* ii. 2, 9. *chap.* xxiv. 7. *Isa.* lvii. 8. — Hunc sensum LXX. ratum faciunt, qui sic locum interpretantur. — *Ubique nominari vel invocari fecero nomen*, illic &c. *Spenceri de Leg. Heb. lib. ii. cap. 5.*

in a due and proper manner. It is by his *word*, principally, that he makes himself known, as I said before, and this is his *name* : Or, where his word is *preached*, there his name is *recorded*.

BUT his *works of power and grace* are what I chiefly intend here, or the *seal and sensible effects* of his *Almighty power* accompanying the word preached ; and these do as much excel his works of nature and providence in general, as his word outshines any other part of his name. — Both accounts may be taken in ; and so the phrase will admit of a double meaning, and may be taken in different senses.

IF by the *name* of GOD we understand his word or worship in general, then his name is recorded, as I now said, where his word is preached, his worship celebrated, and gospel ordinances are duly and faithfully administered, according to the *apprehended* sense of scripture, which we all take for the only canon or rule of worship. And in this sense I would charitably hope, that the name of GOD is recorded in most, or in all places of religious worship among Christians ; and so likewise in the other sense, as the name of GOD may be understood to signify the happy fruit, or good effect of the word and ordinances.

AND thus GOD may be said to record his name where he *comes* to his people, and *blesseth* them,

them, *by means* of his word, or *in the use* of the *publick appointed means of worship*: And so the latter phrase in my text will explain the former. He not only records his name where his word is preached, and other religious exercises are performed; but where blessings attend his word, and the effects of it are visible in holiness, righteousness, and all goodness: When he thus comes to his people, and blesteth them *by means* of his word, he then *records* his name amongst them, or *makes it to be remembered*: The effects of it in this case abide and remain, as so many records to the honour of Divine grace; and are, like letters engraven in brass or marble, durable and lasting. Wherever divine worship is publicly performed in a serious, grave, and solemn manner, (*i. e.* where the name of GOD is thus recorded in any place,) there he usually comes to his people in a more eminent sense, and blesteth them; and where-ever he comes to his people, and blesteth them, or blesteth the word and ordinances to them, there he records his name *effectively*, in the best and highest sense of that expression. And in this sense the two phrases in my text are pretty much *synonymous*: For GOD to record his name amongst a people, and to afford them his gracious presence and blessing, being pretty much one and the same thing.

IF we take it either way, the sense is good; tho' the latter, I think, is more eligible, and
C 3 does

does best accord to the state of things under the gospel. We are not to expect the *Shechinah*, or glorious presence, in our assemblies, or that GOD should record his name amongst us in any such sense as this. It is enough if his *name*, (his power and grace,) be known by the happy effects of his word. If we have not the visible tokens of GOD's presence amongst us, as the *Jews* had; *sure I am*, that the real and sensible effects of his power and grace, (which are sometimes *seen* and understood *in the sanctuary*,) will abundantly make up that deficiency. What is a cloud of glory, a luminous appearance, or shining token of GOD's presence in any place, unless we feel the happy effects of it? Or, what is the *word preached*, without a *suitable corresponding impression* going along with it to the heart and conscience? The former may be looked upon as his *name*, a *sign* or *token* of his presence in the congregation; (and thus he has placed his name amongst *us*, as well as he placed it in *Zion* formerly;) but what is this name, this word, I say, without the kindly *fruits*, and good *effects* of it, or the *agency* of the Spirit with it? It is much the same thing, and in reality no better to us, than the *form of godliness without the power of it*. When the same Spirit that indited the word, works with it, and so renders it effectual to the purposes before-mentioned, this is the best, the surest sign of a gracious and Divine presence with us. The *effect* of the word, in this case, is more than the *word* itself; and we should

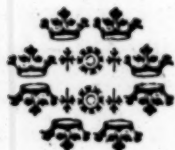
should always prefer and seek it as the most valuable token that GOD himself is present with us in our worshipping assemblies. If He will but *engrave* his name in the effects of his word upon the hearts of men, the sense of this promise will be best explained: And this, I take it, is the ultimate design and view of the words.

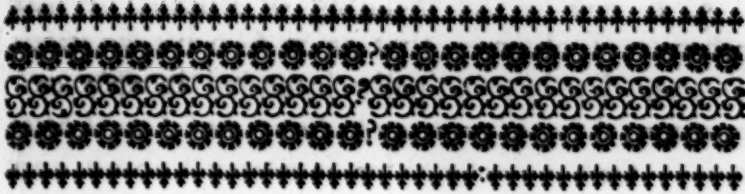
HAVING thus considered, and explained the *phrase* a little distinctly, and in both its parts, I would only make this general remark upon the whole, That we may properly enough understand by it, (in an Evangelical sense, and by way of accommodation,) GOD's *affording us the gospel and ministry of his Son* * in these later

* We may possibly understand, by the name of GOD, any thing that tends more directly to manifest his glory; or any person, or intelligent being, that does more clearly represent his honour and majesty: And to this sense we may interpret that remarkable passage, *Exod. xxiii. 21.* where GOD says concerning the angel of his presence, that he sent before the *Israelites* in the wilderness, *Beware of him, obey his Voice, provoke him not; for my NAME is in him: i. e.* "He acts by my authority and power, and sustains my person, who am present where he is." Thus the majesty and glory of GOD was made manifest amongst the *Israelites*. Or, if the Son of GOD be here meant, as many Christian writers have thought, then the name of GOD here, is the most lofty and sublime discovery, or representation, that he has ever made of Himself to mortal men: GOD's name is in Him; (the manner of expression is very remarkable;) it is He that discovers and makes known the nature, will, and glory of GOD, more than any *creature*, any *angel* ever did: In his nature, undertaking, and offices, in his ministry and gospel, we have

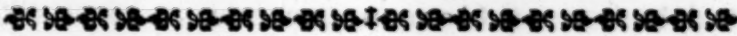
later ages of the world, as the *peculiar glory* of the Christian church : Or, where Christ is preached, and his religion taught in the simplicity and power of it, and the good effects of it are seen ; there GOD may be said to *record his name* at this day. Christ himself is, in the highest and most *emphatical* sense, the *Name*, the *WORD* of GOD, and does in the fullest manner *declare* Him ; agreeably to what the Apostle says, (2 Cor. iv. 6.) *GOD who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of Jesus Christ.* And give me leave to say, that where the *gospel of the kingdom* comes, and is preached to any nation or people with the greatest evidence of success, there the *name*, the *glory* of GOD is best seen and understood : — May his glorious name be thus published, thus *recorded* amongst us !

the most clear and ample discovery of the Great GOD ; or, his name shines forth here with the greatest evidence and lustre.





S E R M O N II.



EXOD. XX. 24.

— *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*

HAVING considered one part of my
H text, and shewn when G O D may be
said to record his name in any place;
I now proceed, as a farther illustration of this matter, to the next thing proposed, which was,

III. To explain the *promise* itself; *In all such places*, says G O D, *I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.* Here are two things considerable; the *import* of this promise, and the *extent* of it. I shall speak to each of them distinctly.

§. I.

§. 1. As to the meaning or import of this promise, I observe, that it is G O D's *gracious presence* that is principally intended in this expression, [*I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee*;] such a presence as is better known and understood by the *blessings* that *attend it* , or the happy consequences and effects of it, as I now said, than by any splendid appearance, or outward manifestation whatever: The presence and blessing of G O D in this case go together, and one and the same thing may be intended in both expressions; where-ever He comes to any place of worship, he there distributes his blessings; and so, on the other hand, when ever He bestows his blessings upon any people, he may be said to afford them his gracious presence, or to *come unto* them. Not that we are to understand hereby any real change in G O D, as if he was locally present in one place, so as not to be present in another at the same time: His *essential* presence is always alike, and every where unseen, and equally the same in *all places* ; nor are we to understand his *majestic* presence merely, (which is the notification, or discovery, of his essential presence in a determinate place, by some kind of magnificent luminous appearance;) but his *gracious* presence is the principal thing, and ultimately to be regarded here: This was *then* promised to all places where the *Shechinah* or *glorious presence* rested; and this is what we are *now* encouraged to expect in every place, where

where the name of G O D is recorded, and public worship performed, according to the institution and rites of the gospel: So that the meaning of this promise, in both its parts, is very clear and evident.

FIRST, [*I will come unto thee* ;] i. e. “ Thou shalt have my presence in spirit, my favourable and gracious presence with thee in every such place: I will be with thee to hear thy prayers, to accept thine oblations, and to bestow my blessing upon thee; or, I will there *meet with thee*, (as the phrase is in other places *,) and manifest myself in a particular manner to every sincere and humble worshiper.” Hence the *tabernacle of the Lord*, the *Jewish* sanctuary, was frequently called *the tabernacle of the congregation*, or rather, of MEETING †; not because of the people’s meeting together in it, (as the excellent Mr. Mede, and others, have noted,) but of G O D’s meeting there with his people. And our places of worship are still tabernacles of *meeting*; houses, in which we professedly go to *meet* with G O D, and more solemnly approach Him: Nor is there any thing so improper, or unseemly, in the name we give them, as some think. If the places themselves are places of gospel-worship, and true devotion; and those that attend in them, are persons of a se-

* Exod. xxv. 22. xxix. 42,-3. † *Obel Moed*. vid. ch. xxx. 36. where the reason of the name is given, as also in *Numb*. xvii. 4.

a serious, peaceable spirit and temper, they are then entitled to the promise in my text, and may hope to *meet with GOD* in them ; or, which is much the same thing, they may hope for the *blessing of GOD upon them*. And this is what I am next to explain.

SECONDLY, [*I will bless thee* ;] the general meaning is, I will give thee *testimonies* of my gracious presence and acceptance. It is a comprehensive word, and includes all that is desirable ; all that tends to the happiness of those that worship him. When he came to the pious *Israelites* formerly, he did not come only for *show*, but brought his blessings along with him : He did not merely dwell upon the *ark of the testimony* between the *cherubims*, and manifest himself there, after a sensible and glorious manner ; but he *communed* with his people from above the *mercy-seat* ; he displayed his mercy and grace, imparted his counsel and will in many cases, and distributed his gifts and favours with a liberal hand, and in great variety : There the *LORD commanded the blessing* ; his word of blessing was *effectual* ; it was sure and operative ; he there answered, and fulfilled their requests, and was graciously nigh unto them, to render the appointments of his own house of *real* service to them : The presence of his grace was always attended with the most desirable and blessed *effects* : This is more directly meant here. — He *blesseth a people* when he blesteth the word and ordinances to them,

them, and does them good by this means: These are the *provisions* of his house, which he has promised to *blefs*, and to *blefs abundantly* * : And this he may be said to do, when he makes them to answer the great ends of their appointment. — He *blesseth the word*, v. g. when he prepareth the mind to receive and entertain it with faith and love, and bringeth the very soul and affections to it; and especially, when his *Almighty power* goes along with it, or his *Spirit* accompanies it to the heart and conscience. — And so it may be said of all gospel *worship* and *ordinances in general* : He may be said to bless us in the use of these appointments, when they are made to promote our knowledge and holiness, to cherish and maintain a spiritual and divine life in us, and to impart all necessary light, strength, and comfort, in the various services and trials of life. The institutions of the gospel do our souls good, when they keep the principles of religion alive and active, when they recruit our spiritual strength, repair our weaknesses, warm and invigorate our graces, and are productive of all virtuous and good actions, (the natural and genuine evidence of a spiritual and divine life,) to the glory of G O D, and the credit of our profession.

THIS may suffice to lead us into the sense of the phrase, *I will blefs thee* : In some such way

* Psal. cxxxii. 15.

way and manner as this, G O D did bless the religious rites of the *Jews* formerly, to those that were sincere and faithful in their observance of them: Their *burnt-offerings* and *sacrifices* were accepted on G O D's *altar*, and blessed to the great ends of their appointment.— And so it is at this day: G O D will own and prosper all gospel ordinances now, to those who attend upon them in a right manner: He is nigh to his people in a peculiar sense; *nigh* to them in all that *they call upon him for*, nigh to receive their services, to accept their offerings, to answer their prayers, and to give forth to them a supply of all their wants. All this, and more than this, (had I time to represent it,) is included in this gracious promise.— And what recommends it the more is,

§. 2. T H E *universality* or *extent* of it. The promise is not limited to one place, or one people: It is not confined to the *wilderness*, to the *tabernacle* or *temple* of old, or the *Jewish nation* only: *In ALL places*, says G O D, *where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*

I SHALL represent the matter with respect to *persons* and *places* both, and observe,

(1.) T H A T the promise extends, in the sense I have now explained it, to *all places* of worship, and may be fulfilled in one as well as

as another*. It was indeed primarily made to those places, which GOD himself should order and appoint; but it is not to be confined to them, and the reason of the thing will extend to all alike: The promise was chiefly made to the *Israelites* as a *religious body*, or *worshiping people*; and is therefore to be taken, as I before explained it, in a *moral evangelical* sense, and as carrying in it equal respect and encouragement to all places of worship *as such*.

WE read that the *patriarchs* (before the law of *Moses* gave any particular rules about places of worship,) erected altars where-ever they pitched their tents, and offered sacrifices in *any* place; every head of a family performing the office of a priest; which seems to have been the case, not only before the deluge, but a considerable time after: To a holy people, and a holy GOD, all places are alike; and the substance of this promise was vouchsafed to good men in former times long before the promise itself was made: GOD's *gracious* presence from the very first was never confined to any one place; nor does it appear that there were any publick fixed houses of worship for above two thousand years. The true church is not limited to houses, or buildings, and may subsist without them. — It was common for all nations formerly, *Jews*
as

* I mean, where-ever the worship itself is pure and uncorrupted, and agreeable to the appointment and will of GOD, so far as we are able to understand it: There GOD dwells with a people, and records his name.

as well as *Heathens*, to perform worship in the open air, on mountains, and in fields and groves *.——And it deserves observation, that this promise in my text was made to the *Israelites before the tabernacle † was erected*: They travelled up and down in the wilderness for some time, before they were brought to any settled state, or had any appointed places or structures for publick worship. And in this circumstance and view of the case it was a very kind and encouraging promise which G O D here made them: *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, &c.* “ There “ is therefore no need of building any stately “ altar in a certain place, as if my presence “ was fixed there, and not to be enjoyed else- “ where.” As G O D is immensely great, and every where present; so He is graciously nigh to his own people, *when and where-ever* they call upon him. The *Jewish* church had the promise of his presence in *every* place of worship, in *any* part of the wilderness.

A N D when they came to the promised land, (as some writers observe ||,) and were many of

* Gen. xxi. 33. See *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. ii. pag. 367,—9.

† I mean, the *great* tabernacle, which was built for divine service alone, by G O D's own appointment, and according to the *pattern* which *Moses* saw in the Mount; for there seems to have been another *smaller occasional* one, before *this*, built for present use, and *other* purposes, where he gave audience, heard causes, enquired of G O D, &c. See *Exod.* xxxiii. 6, 7, &c.

|| V. *Lightfoot* on the Temple, ch. 39.

of them at a distance from the tabernacle, the *high places* were lawful, and they were permitted to offer sacrifices elsewhere. The *Jews*, indeed, had properly no fixt place of worship till the *temple* was built, which was about four hundred and fourscore years * after their coming out of *Egypt*; some think, much longer: *Then* sacrifices were to be offered no where else, that being the center of unity, or place of common worship for all the congregation of *Israel*: And yet, even *then*, G O D's presence and blessing was not confined to that place: They had their *oratories*, or *houses of prayer*, where G O D was acceptably worshiped, and graciously present, as well as in the temple. And, besides these, they had a great many other *more* publick places of worship, while the temple itself was standing, in which the people assembled for divine worship every sabbath-day: These were *synagogues* †, so called, or meeting-houses, in which the priests prayed, read the law, and expounded it, and the natural or moral ‡ parts of

* 1 Kings vi. 1.

† Psal. lxxiv. 8. Some historians tell us, that there were no less than four hundred and eighty of these synagogues in *Jerusalem*, when that city was destroyed by the *Romans*. V. *Sigonii de Repub. Heb. lib. ii. cap. 8.*

‡ This kind of worship might *then* be performed, as well in any other place, as in the temple; and, at *this day*, in *one* place as well as in *another*: It was chiefly directed by the light of nature and common prudence, and not by the customs and practices of the temple, which were peculiar to the *Jewish* nation: And it should seem that the worship and order of the *Christian church*, (which is not so limited, but multiplied and spread thro' many nations,

of religion were chiefly celebrated. G O D was then graciously present in these places to bless his people, as well as in the temple, tho' they had not such *visible* and *shining* tokens of his presence in them.

A N D if the case stood thus with the *Israelites* in former times, all Christian worshippers have greatly the advantage under the gospel. We know no difference of places since the coming

and amongst persons of different opinions, customs, and prejudices,) is now to be determined in a great measure by the same rule, and is very much left to the discretion and agreement of the worshippers themselves. Nor can we, upon any other bottom, so well account for the silence and obscurity of the New Testament, with respect to the parts, circumstances, order, and modes of divine worship; especially when we consider how circumstantial and express the law of *Moses* was in all these things. This, I think, does plainly teach us, that the *true Christian* worship is less ceremonious, more spiritual and free, and better suited to the maturer age of the church, as well as to the nature of G O D, and his intelligent creatures. A precise uniformity of public worship, in these lesser matters, is not to be expected, or practised, since christianity has been diffused and propagated thro' so many different people and different climates of the world; and where it is reasonable to suppose, there would be a much greater variety of opinions and sentiments, than in any single nation only: And therefore the *gospel* does not so particularly describe the manner and way of worship to *Christians*, as the *law of Moses* did to the *Jewish* nation. Beside, this might be designed as a proper trial of the mutual forbearance, love, and charity of all Christians every where, who *hold the head*, notwithstanding their difference of opinion in lesser and circumstantial matters: The Gospel, or New Testament, has only drawn out some of the more plain uncontroverted laws and lineaments of worship, leaving other things to be determined by christian societies, as may best answer the great end of *edification*.

coming of Christ. When the tabernacle was taken down, the temple demolished, and the *Jewish* state of peculiarity and ceremonies was at an end, all places were substantially alike, and so they continue to this day, without any such peculiarity, or special appropriation of privileges to one more than to another. Under the gospel, *incense* is to be offered up in *every place*, according to antient prophecy; *Mal. i. 11.* There is no command for setting apart *this*, or *that* place, rather than any other: The worship *itself* is *necessary*, but the place *where* is *indifferent*, *undetermined*, and altogether a *discretionary* thing. Hence the apostle advises, *I will that men pray every where*; *1 Tim. ii. 8.* GOD is ready to hear and answer in *all places*: I don't say, in an *idol-temple*, or in places of gross superstition, ignorance, and prophaneness: He has no where promised his presence to those who worship false gods, and false mediators, or to them who *hold the truth in unrighteousness*; but in all places of worship amongst Christians, and wheresoever persons are truly sincere and devout, and worship GOD according to the best light they have. For my part, I can never condemn those churches which *endeavour* to serve GOD with pure and safe consciences according to the direction of his word, tho' they should mistake the rule, or differ from my own interpretation and sense of it. *Sincere* and *upright* services are as acceptable to GOD in all parts of the world, as at *Jerusalem*; upon *this spot* of ground, as

in any other place.— And there can be no difficulty in conceiving why it should be so, if we consider,

(2.) THAT the promise has a principal regard to *persons*, and extends to all without exception that serve GOD in sincerity and truth, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*. The promise is as extensive in this view as in the other, tho' the expression is more particular and definite. The *worshippers* themselves are of greater account with Him, than *places* of worship can be; and it is always for the sake of any *people* that he has a regard to one place more than to another. For instance, Did he manifest himself in the temple formerly more than in other places? it was because of that particular relation and respect which he bore to the *Jews*, as his peculiar favourite people, and whom he was pleased, for wise reasons, thus to distinguish and honour at that time above other nations round about them. But this distinction is now ceased: and if there be any difference, as to the manifestation or presence of GOD in places of worship now, it must arise from something else, and the manner of it be very different from what it was formerly.

It will be an easy explication of this matter to observe, that the *Jews* were called GOD's *segullah*, or *peculiar people**, because they were elected by him to enjoy special privileges above other

* Deut. xiv. 2.

other people, and brought by him for that end out of the land of *Egypt*, in a wonderful manner, and then had his glory dwelling amongst them. They were separated unto GOD by peculiar laws and rites: Therefore GOD commanded them to distinguish themselves even in their *diet* from other people, and not to eat such things as the *Gentiles* did, which is the meaning of their being *holy to GOD**; and hence they were called a *kingdom of priests*, and a *holy nation*†. But this difference, I say, is now ceased since the coming of Christ, and the preaching of his gospel to all the world: The *partition wall* is taken down, the antient enclosure broken up, and every one now is an *Israelite* indeed, that worshipeth GOD *in spirit and in truth*, of what nation, tribe, or family soever he be. Every *true Christian* now is a *priest unto GOD*||: He offers up such sacrifices, by *Jesus Christ*, as are acceptable to GOD in any place‡; and the promise that is here made to the *Jewish nation* in particular, is equally applicable to every such person, (to a collective body, or number of them, more especially;) *I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*

UPON the whole, it is now much the same with regard both to *people* and *places*:—What advantage hath the *Jew* above the *Gentile*? Or what advantage hath one place above another?

D 3

The

* Deut. xiv. 21. Exod. xxii. 31.
|| Rev. i. 6.

† Exod. xix. 6.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 5.

The Christian religion makes room for *all*, and opens a door of equal privileges to all nations where-ever it comes. This is the purport of our Lord's reply to the woman of *Samaria**; *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. And again, The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him: q. d. " This dispute shall soon*
" be over, (whether at Jerusalem, or at Geri-
" zim, men ought to worship,) for the city
" and temple shall quickly be destroyed, your
" ceremonious worship be quite abolished, and
" a liberty given to worship GOD with spiritual
" sacrifices in any place without distinction:
" Jerusalem and Samaria are no more; there
" is no more occasion or ground of contest be-
" twixt them; one place, one mountain now, is
" as good as another: As the worship of GOD
" is not confined, so neither is his presence, his
" gracious presence limited to one place more
" than another." What St. Peter said with
respect to Cornelius, who was the first-fruits of
the Gentile world, is very applicable to this
case, and a farther illustration of it†; Of a
truth, says he, I perceive that GOD is no re-
specter of persons; but, in every nation, he that
feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted
with him; or, in every place, he that worship-
eth GOD in spirit and in truth shall be accept-
ed

* John iv. 21, 23.

† Acts x. 34-5.

ed with him. GOD has no distinguishing regard to persons and places under the gospel, where that is promulgated, or made known. And so we are to understand the passage before us, when we apply it to gospel-times; or what has been said may pass for a distinct and full *explication* of the words, in reference to ourselves, and the dispensation we are now under.

I SHALL propose two or three reflections, which is all the *application* I shall make of this discourse.

REFLECT. (I.) Let us bless GOD that he has recorded his *name* and *gospel*, or placed his worship and ordinances amongst *us*. It is our privilege that we have the gospel from heaven to enlighten us, whilst so many nations sit in darkness; and that we have it so *clearly* revealed to us in the writings of the *New Testament*; and not only revealed in general, but explained and unfolded in our publick synagogues and houses of worship every Lord's-day: This is *the glory of our Israel*; (the *Jews* had it under types and shadows, and in a more obscure edition; and the *Heathens* have only the dim light of nature to guide them:) Nor have any people under heaven, perhaps, such advantages for understanding this revelation as we have: GOD has revealed his *statutes* and *judgments* unto us in such a manner, as he has not done to other parts of the world, no, not even to the *Jewish* nation

tion formerly : For, we have not only *Moses and the Prophets*, but *Christ* and his *Apostles* : We have plenty of *bibles*, plenty of gospel means and mercies, and a great variety of suitable helps. What faith the scripture ? *the Word* [of faith] is very *nigh* * us : *GOD* has brought down his gospel to our *eyes* and *ears* ; the *memory* and *understandings* of many are furnished with it ; and he is ready to write it by his Spirit in all our *hearts* : We need not go *far* to seek the *word of the Lord*, nor wander far to worship Him : We have *places* of worship, numerous and convenient, in which we can hold our *solemn assemblies*, without disturbance or fear from our enemies : And how many are our opportunities of this kind, if we had but hearts to improve them ? A *wide door is open*, and none *have been able to shut it*, tho' there *have been*, and still *are many adversaries*. Let us pity and pray for the *Pagan* world, and our *Protestant brethren* in *Popish* countries ; and be duly thankful for light, and liberty, and all our Christian privileges. Let us bless *GOD* that he has permitted us to make our solemn approaches to Him in *any* place, and to erect houses of worship to his name and honour ; that we have the pure worship and ordinances of the gospel amongst us, upon which *GOD* has stamped his own *authority*, and has thus recorded his name in the churches of *Great Britain*. It is our singular privilege, that we have the *name*, the *glory* of *GOD*, amongst us ; and that

* Deut. xxx. 14. Compare Rom. x. 8.

that he has placed his *tabernacle*, his *dwelling* in the midst of us. How few * in the world, comparatively, enjoy the gospel, or are favoured with a gospel-ministry in its purity and simplicity? The name, the worship of *Antichrist* is far more known and rivetted, in many places, than the name of *GOD*, or the gospel of our *Lord Jesus Christ*: And in this respect *GOD* has been pleased to distinguish us from the rest of the world, as much as he did the *Jews*, his peculiar favourite people, from other nations round about them. — When the apostle is setting forth the great advantages and privileges of the *Jews* above all other people, he takes particular notice of this, among the rest, that to them *pertained the glory*; and the residence of the Divine glory amongst that people was, without doubt, a signal honour done them; it was their privilege and glory that they had the temple of *GOD* amongst them. — But have not *we* in respect of the gospel now, as great an honour and privilege as ever *they* had? Are not publick ordinances the sign and pledge of *GOD*'s presence with us? These, certainly, are the glory of a people that *enjoy*, that *improve* them. Or, to speak all in one word, we have *CHRIST* amongst us: The *Lamb* is the glory of *mount Zion*: The gospel is the glory of the Christian church.

* Many have thought, that of thirty parts into which the world may be divided, twenty-five are *Pagans*, *Jews*, and *Mahometans*, and that five only can properly be said to bear the *Christian* name,

REFLECT. (2.) We should not only be thankful that this gospel is preached, and gospel-worship performed, in so many places of worship, in every part of the land; but that we have so much *reason and encouragement to hope for the presence and blessing of GOD with us, in one place as well as in another.* The promise that is here made extends to *every true worshiper, in any place of worship whatever. I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*—What a condescending and gracious promise is this? It may well excite the wonder and grateful surprize of every one that considers it: Shall the infinite and glorious Majesty of heaven come down, and dwell with men on earth! We reckon it an honour, many times, when a superior will condescend to make us a visit, and take up with such accommodations as we are able to give him: But how inconceivably great must the honour be, that the *High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity*, should come to his people and *bless* them; that he should not only afford us his *presence*, but bring his royal favours and *blessings* along with him? Can any friendship, any intercourse or communion, be more advantageous to men on earth? Let us admire the honour, and improve the privilege as we ought to do. — What are any of the children of men, (that go to compose or make up our assemblies for religious worship, in *this* place, or in any *other*,) that GOD should thus *regard and visit* them? We are all of us mean, frail,
and

and worthless creatures at best; nay, what is more, sin hath stained our natures, and made us wretchedly unfit for a holy GOD to converse with; and yet such is his marvellous condescension and grace, that he is willing to take up his abode with us, and to accept of a dwelling-place amongst us! He is not *worshiped with men's hands*, says the apostle, *as tho' he needed any thing**; *for he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things*: Nor doth he require any earthly temple, as tho' he wanted a place of rest: Is not the *heaven his throne, and the earth his footstool*? And have not *his hands made all these things*†? — How admirable then is the condescension of GOD, when we view it in this light! His *self-sufficiency* sets him above the want of *any thing*, and the utmost we can do falls vastly beneath his grandeur and majesty; and yet he is willing to accept of *us*, of the houses we *build*, and the services we *perform* in any place. What surprizing grace, and pure goodness must this be! We may say, as *David*, here; *Is this the manner of men, O Lord GOD*‡? It was this consideration that so much affected king *Solomon*, and filled him with grateful astonishment; *But will GOD in very deed dwell among men on the earth? Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built* ||? — Surely,

* Acts xvii. 24,-5. Psal. l. 10. † Acts vii. 48, 49, 50. Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. ‡ 2 Sam. vii. 19. || 2 Chron. vi. 18.

Surely, if any thing in the world will affect and surprize a considerate mind, this must do it:— And we should reflect upon it in our most serious thoughts, in order to excite our greater admiration and thankfulness upon this occasion. — Had the congregation of *Israel* a promise of *God's* presence with them, a comfortable token of it, in all places of the wilderness, both night and day, which never left them, but brought them to *Canaan*, the *land of promise* *? Why, the very same privilege, the same expectation, and ground of hope have all Christians under the gospel, or something which is greater and far better †. Had they a tabernacle for worship, as well as tents to dwell in? so have we; and much the advantage in many respects. Was their sanctuary distinguished and honoured by the *Shechinah*, (the sensible glorious presence of *God* in it?) ours is no less so by his presence in Spirit, his gracious presence in the midst of us. Let us admire the grace wherein we stand, and bless *God* that we have such accommodations in our wilderness-state; that we have not only houses to dwell in, but houses to worship *God* in; and that he has promised his presence with us in all places, if we will but serve him conscientiously, or call upon him in truth †. — It speaks the greatest encouragement to all Christians, that where-ever *God* is worshiped, according to his own institution and appointment, he still records his name;

* *Exod.* xl. 38.† *Psal.* cxlv. 18.

name ; and we may expect the accomplishment of what he has promised, that he *will come* to his people, and *will bless* them.

REFLECT. (3.) Let us therefore *plead* this *promise*, and be *earnest* with *GOD* that he would afford us his gracious presence in our religious assemblies, or *record his name in our hearts by the lasting effects of his word and spirit*. What do we here, unless we meet with *GOD*, and the great Master of the assemblies be present with us? This, I hope, is the principal thing that every one now is solicitous and thoughtful about. I am sure it *ought* to be so; there being nothing of greater consequence to us than this. All the comfort and success of gospel worship and ordinances must depend upon it. If *GOD* be with us, it is well and happy for us, let the place in which we meet be what it will ; but nothing will supply the room of this :—— The presence of *GOD*, his *gracious* presence with us, is all in all. This is more than the *silver* and *gold* and costly furniture in *Solomon's temple* ; nay, it is more in reality than the *Shechinah* itself, or any such splendid appearance, or signal manifestation whatever.

LET us therefore be concerned, above all things, to secure the presence of our great Lord and Master with us : Let us watch against pride, formality, and unprofitableness ;
and

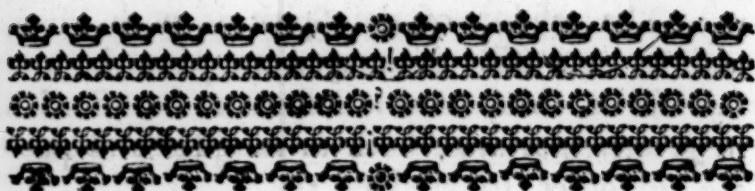
and dread it as the greatest judgment, to be left to a lifeless gospel and an ineffectual ministry. — In order to secure the Divine presence and blessing, let us be earnest in our prayers to G O D for it. It was *David's* most earnest and importunate desire, that he might see the *power and glory of G O D in his sanctuary* * ; i. e. he desired to worship before the *ark* of G O D's presence, which was a *token* of his power and majesty residing amongst the *Israelites*. And something of this kind should be the matter of our unanimous and fervent request to G O D upon this occasion ; viz. that we may enjoy his *gracious* presence in this place, with all the concomitant *fruits* and happy *effects* of it ; that we may have some discovery of his glory amongst us, some enjoyment of G O D in his ordinances, some soul-refreshment and comfort under them, and the powerful workings of his Spirit with them. We should pray that the word may become effectual to demolish the strong-holds of darkness, and to impress the image of the glory of G O D upon the souls of men. — And, in a word, that all gospel institutions may be blessed to the great ends of their appointment, to enlighten the understanding, renew the will, impress the heart, reform the life, and promote the edification and comfort of the church in general. How happy would it be for us, if we had
these

* Psal. lxiii. 2.

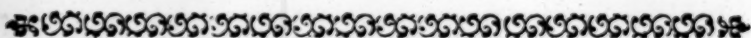
these signs and tokens of GoD's presence with us: The residue of the Spirit is with Him, and we are still encouraged to *plead* it, and *hope* for it. May Divine influences be afforded in greater measures, both to minister and people, in order to produce these desirable ends with greater evidence and success. *Amen.*



SERMON



S E R M O N III.



E X O D. XX. 24.

— *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*

IN the two former discourses I have more particularly *explained* the words, and set the promise which G O D here made the *Israelites* in *such a light*, as may afford equal encouragement to all pious and good persons under the gospel: *We* are as much within the compass and extent of this promise as the *Israelites* formerly: And that this may appear with the greater evidence, I shall proceed to the *last* thing proposed, and shew

IV. UPON what *basis* or *foundation* it is, that all religious assemblies now, may expect and hope for, the presence and blessing of G O D
with

with them ; and that in *one place as well as another*. I shall state the matter in a few particulars, and observe in the first place,

§. I. THAT the nature and design of the *Christian religion*, or the *gospel dispensation*, is a *principal* ground of encouragement in this case.

As the *parts* of *Christian* worship are mostly *natural*, and the *same* throughout all ages, (such as prayer and praise, and learning the mind and will of GOD, so far as it is revealed, and we have the means of understanding it,) so they are reasonable and fit in themselves, and acceptable to GOD in *all places*. And even as to *positive institutions*, and the peculiar principles and discoveries of the gospel, these are attached to no particular place or people, as the *Jewish* rites and ceremonies were: They are easy to be observed in any place, are most agreeable to our conceptions of GOD, and the dictates of reason, and admirably suited to the state and circumstances of mankind in general *.

AND

* This is clear in the point of *baptism* especially, which was a rite that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* revered: It being used by the former for the initiation of their females and proselytes; and more acceptable to the latter, as it was one of their own religious ceremonies, less painful, and not so infamous and offensive as circumcision. And the same observation may be carried to other particulars.

E

AND as the *nature* of the Christian worship and institution, is such as may equally suit every place and people throughout the world; so it was calculated for the general good of mankind, and *designed* to visit all nations: And consequently we, in this age and part of the world, may hope to enjoy the presence of GOD in our Christian assemblies on much the same foot as the *Jews themselves* did. Our privileges are *common* under the gospel; and the reason of the thing is much the same, as all distinguishing regards are now ceased. This I have hinted at already, and shall now bring the whole matter into one view, and place it in a distinct light. — The state of things is very much altered since the coming of Christ from what it was before: The presence of GOD is no longer limited to any one *place*, and the church of the Messiah takes in *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, according to many antient prophecies that have long since been accomplished †: They are all one, (and admitted upon the same foot,) in Christ Jesus ‡: The difference of persons and sexes now makes no difference in their relation to Christ, and their justification by him. Amongst the *Jews*, the natives of some countries might not be admitted into the congregation, till the tenth generation ||; but here there is neither *Greek nor Jew, circumcision*

† Isa. xlix. 6. liii. 10. ‡ Gal. iii. 28.
Ammonite or Moabite; Deut. xxiii. 3.

|| As an

The Gospel Sanctuary. 1

circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all *. And the interest and union that we all have in one Christ, should swallow up all the little differences of Greek or Jew, (as well as all party-distinctions amongst Christians †:) *St. Paul's argument is much to this purpose; The righteousness of GOD, saith he, is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference ‡.* And in another place, he assures us, that GOD will give glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with him ||. And we find even *St. Peter*, the apostle of the circumcision, making the same open profession †. — Salvation by faith in Christ was first proposed to the Jews; but upon their refusal, it was offered without distinction to the Gentiles, who received it gladly: This is represented in several parables, particularly that of the *wedding-supper* §; and our Lord himself tells us, that it *behooved him to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations* **. The offers of salvation were to be urged upon mankind in general: And accordingly, Christ and his apostles preached the gospel in all places, and to all comers;

* Col. iii. 11. † 1 Cor. i. 12, 13. ‡ Rom. iii. 22. and 29, 30. *Vid.* Eph. ii. 13, &c. || Rom. ii. 10, 11. † Acts x. 35. § Mat. xxii. ** Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

The Gospel Sanctuary.

comers, and were very zealous and indefatigable in this work. Our *Saviour*, when on earth, went thro' the cities of *Judea* and *Samaria*, inviting the inhabitants of those places to believe in Him: And the *apostles*, we are told, (at the time of Pentecost,) addressed themselves not only to the men of *Judea*, but to all that dwelt at *Jerusalem*, *Parthians*, *Medes*, *Elamites*, and many others*. And their *success* also was no less remarkable: Hence was that complaint of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, *What do we? for this man doth many miracles: if we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him*†. And by the hands of the *apostles* were many signs and wonders wrought with great success: Many were *pricked in the heart*, and *repented*, and were *baptized*‡: Three thousand were converted at one time, (of *Jews* of all nations,) and five thousand at another; and *believers* were daily *added to the Lord*, even *multitudes of men and women* ||; so mightily grew the word of the Lord, and prevailed. [Christian ministers are hence encouraged to preach the gospel, and propagate the truth in all places; and in carrying on this glorious design, they may still hope for God's favourable and gracious presence with them.] The *apostles* (after our Lord's ascension,) were authorized to preach the gospel to *every creature*: And, in the execution of this commission, they frequently disputed both with *Jews* and *Gentiles*,

* Acts ii. 9, 10, 14. † John xi. 47, 48. See also chap. iii. 26. ‡ Acts ii. 37, 38, 41. || Acts v. 14.

tiles, arguing with the former from the *scriptures*, and with the latter from those *miraculous* evidences which G O D had given them, that Jesus was the Christ. And in less than forty years they went almost thro' the then known world, according to our Lord's prediction*.

— They no sooner went out upon the great design of converting the world, and gathering a church out of the distant and scattered nations of the earth, but the hand of the Lord was with them in a visible and glorious manner,

T H E *Jewish* nation was his church and enclosure formerly, and the tabernacle or *temple* was the place to which the publick worship was then confined: *At Salem was his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion*†: But as soon as Christ sent his apostles into all the world, to teach and baptize all nations, G O D then gave him the *Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*‡. When once the gospel went forth from *Jerusalem*, it shot like *lightning* into other nations, even *from one end of the heavens to the other*. An innumerable multitude of Christians, says *Eusebius*, in all cities and countries, like corn into a well filled granary, were brought in, by the grace of G O D, which bringeth salvation: And in the space of three hundred years we find the Christian religion propagated thro' all

E 3

the

* Mat. xxiv. 14.

† Psal. lxxvi. 2.

‡ Psal. ii. 8.

the *Roman* empire, which was then so extensive as to be called, [ὅλην τὴν γῆν,] the whole world.

AND that the gospel was thus designed to visit and include all nations without distinction, is very evident from many plain and express passages of scripture. Besides those already mentioned, I will take notice of *two* in particular. — *St. Stephen's* defence of himself is much to this purpose*: He had been charged with blasphemy in alledging, that *Jesus of Nazareth* would destroy the *temple*, and change the customs which *Moses* delivered†: But in vindication of himself, he makes it plain from the scriptures of the Old Testament, that *GOD* never intended to confine his worship and presence to the land of *Canaan*, or temple of *Jerusalem*, tho' he had all along shewn some special regards to that people: and that the law of ceremonies was never designed to be of lasting obligation or use, but only till the coming of Christ, that *great prophet*, whom *Moses* foretold: *The Most High*, says he, *dwell-eth not in temples made with hands*; — intimating that the holiness of the temple, in which they boasted, was just at an end, and that his habitation is not confined to material buildings. — *St. Peter's* vision also was very remarkable, and given with this view‡: The design of it was to instruct him to call no man *common* or *unclean*, and to dispose him to go and preach the gospel to *Cornelius*, who was by birth a pagan: And
accord-

* Acts vii.

† Chap. vi. 14.

‡ Chap. x. 10, &c.

accordingly, he tells us in another place, that GOD made choice of *him*, that the *Gentiles* by his mouth should bear the word of the gospel, and believe, &c.*

NOW from these passages it is very plain, that all ceremonious worship is ceased, that the *antient distinction* of persons and places is laid aside, and that all are admitted to the same privileges under the gospel; there being no special or distinguishing regards had to any, but what arise from their intrinsic moral character. Which leads me to the next observation.

§. 2. THE nature of GOD inclines him to shew a particular favour and respect to every *sincerely good* man, as such; and in every state and circumstance of life, he is always secure of his friendly care and presence†; which is a consideration of no small weight in the present argument. All ceremonial outward regards are of small account with GOD: It is the *real moral* character that he chiefly looks at; and it is the plain design of the gospel to fasten and inculcate this upon us; *Rom. ii. 28,-9.* *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men,*
E 4 but

* Acts xv. 7, 8, 9.
Met. lib. viii.

† *Cura pii Dis sunt. Ovid.*

but of GOD. It is not to persons that are so, or so *circumstanced*, with respect to their station in the world, or church ; but to all that are truly good and virtuous, that GOD has promised his presence and blessing. Let a man live never so obscurely or meanly in the world, if he be one that fears GOD, and is truly religious, he has always a gracious and divine presence with him. There is no place, or circumstance, that can be any bar to the Divine influence or benediction ; and every individual, holy, upright person is always entitled to the favour and blessing of heaven. Is he, at any time, engaged in *acts of worship*, or in the *common affairs* of life ? He has still a promise of GOD's presence with him : He is *habitually* holy, and good, and *such* an one, the *holy* and righteous Being cannot but love and delight in : *The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself** ; and *the upright shall dwell in his presence†*. All pious families, and pious persons, may claim the benefit of this promise, wherever they are engaged in worshipping GOD, whether in publick, or in private : He will be nigh to such in *every* place, and will fulfil the promise which he has here made them : To this sense we may apply the words of *St. John*, (and speak it with admiration, as he did,) *Behold ! the tabernacle of GOD is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and GOD himself shall be with them,*
and

* Psal. cxl. 13.

† Psal. iv. 3.

and be their GOD*. — But in order to bring the argument in full view, I add further,

§. 3. IF this promise extends to *individuals*, and to every *good person*, separately and distinctly, it will with greater reason extend to a *number of such persons*, assembled together in a *publick* manner, for the more immediate acts of religious worship; and it speaks *particular* encouragement to them when they meet together, (as the first Christians did,) with a spirit of love and unity. Now this appears from the nature and reason of the thing, from the plain declarations and promises of GOD in scripture, and from the experience of the saints in all ages.

1. IT is evident from the *nature* and *reason* of the thing. When *holy persons* meet together in *publick places*, and in *greater numbers*, they have the greater hope and prospect of meeting with GOD, and may expect his blessing with them. GOD *loves* his own people and children, (as I now said,) all that bear his image, and are conformed to his will: And if he loves them, as such, *at all times*, he must have a *particular* regard to them, whenever they bring their offerings, or pay their homage and worship to Him; but, *especially*, when they assemble together in a more *publick manner*, and in *greater numbers*, for this purpose. The Great
GOD

* Rev. xxi. 3.

GOD has a tribute of honour paid him by every devout worshiper in his *private retirements*, but a much higher degree of honour from religious *assemblies*; or, he is honoured in the sanctuary, more than he is in the closet; *more*, by a greater number of serious worshipers together, than by a single person, or lesser society of men: The tide of glory, in this case, swells higher, (as one observes,) and the *name*, the *worship* of GOD is thus proclaimed, and recommended to the world, with the greater advantage and beauty.

AND as he receives greater *honour* from such persons, so he is more liberal in his *favours* to them: They have many times a larger share of his presence and blessing: And the reason of the thing is very evident. The more large and numerous, the more friendly and harmonious, any religious societies are, the nearer resemblance they bear to the general assembly, and church triumphant in heaven, where the *face of GOD* is unveiled, and his noblest *blessings* are dispensed. No wonder, then, if a sacred multitude giving glory to GOD with united hearts and voices, are honoured with peculiar marks of the Divine favour: They have more of heaven upon earth; and it will be *heaven itself*, when saints and angels, (all the true worshipers of GOD, of every name and character, and in every age of the world,) shall join together in one full and glorious assembly. The praises of GOD sound best in concert,

concert, and are peculiarly acceptable : The concurrence and harmony of worshipers adds much to the pleasure and advantage of publick worship. GOD is more honoured, the church is more edified, and every part of worship is more delightful. Nothing will *invite* and *engage* the presence of GOD *more*, than purity and concord in our prayers and praises, and other acts of publick worship. “ As the universal
“ applause of a *nation* reflects greater lustre on
“ a prince, or general, than the congratulations
“ of a few favourites ; so it is in the case before
“ us.” When Christians join together in publick worship, they do him greater honour, and may hope for greater respect and favour from him. He *will honour those who* (thus) *honour him* * ; and, according to his promise, will *come unto* them, and will *bless* them. — But this leads us to observe,

2. THE same thing is still more evident from the many *declarations* and *promises of GOD in scripture*. He is said to *dwell* in places of publick worship more *eminently*, and there he *commands the blessing*. He has promised it more *directly*, more *emphatically* (I may say,) to publick conventions, or meetings, of *this kind*, which is another ground of expectation, or encouragement to us, upon this head. It appears, I think, very plainly from the *text*, and from several passages, both in the Old and New Testament, that larger assemblies for social

* 1 Sam. ii. 30.

cial worship are entitled to the peculiar regards of heaven. — *In all places where I record my name*, says G O D, *I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.* Wheresoever G O D erected, or placed, the memorials of his name formerly, he there promised his *gracious presence*, or *blessing*, which was always vouchsafed to every sincere and humble worshiper. And it is said, more expressly, for our encouragement, in this case, that G O D *loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob* * : He had a respect to all the habitations of his people, wherein he was worshiped *privately* ; but especially to the gates of *Zion*, where he was *publickly* worshiped : The same authority requires both publick and private worship, (nor can I see, how *any truly* religious person, or family, can live in the neglect of either ;) but, then, he always *prefers* the former, and makes a more delightful residence with religious *assemblies*, especially on his *own day*, which is now called the *Lord's-day*. And remarkable to this purpose is another passage, in *Isaiab* †, (which plainly refers to the Christian state and worship,) viz. *The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night : for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.* The general meaning is, that G O D's regard

* Psal, lxxxvii. 2.

† Isa. iv. 5, 6,

gard to his church and people under the gospel shall be as great as it was in the wilderness: His *presence* is as considerable, and his *protection* and *care*, now, the same as ever. There is a particular strength and beauty in this manner and variety of expression: "Did GOD then
 " fill the *inside* of the tabernacle with his glory,
 " and cover the *outside* of it with a thick cloud,
 " to intimate the security of his people, and
 " of all their enjoyments, in publick worship;
 " even so, is the presence of the Lord *within* his
 " churches *now*, as the appearance of his glory
 " to refresh them, and his presence *without*,
 " as a thick cloud or covering to defend
 " them." He is *a sun and shield*, as the Psalmist speaks, (referring, perhaps, to this very case,) *he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly**, them that *serve* him in sincerity and truth. And, to this purpose, the words of Solomon may be somewhat applicable: *Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors*†. Or, whatever be the sense of these passages, they doubtless speak encouragement to all that *fear* GOD, and wait upon him in *publick worship*; for the promises which are made to single persons, or to the exercises of piety and virtue in the general, may be fitly applied to all *publick, solemn* acts of devotion; and every conscientious *upright* worshiper may take encouragement
 from

* *Vid.* Psal. lxxxiv. 11. with the whole preceding context.
 † Prov. viii. 34, 35.

from them. When such persons meet together, they may hope to meet with *G O D*; especially, when they meet upon a *religious* account, and to engage in exercises of divine *worship*: They have a *peculiar* claim to the promise of acceptance; and their united prayers are usually more *prevalent* and *successful*: Or, if he should not answer them in the thing they desire, or bestow *the blessing* they ask for, he will be sure to afford them his *gracious* presence, and always give them what is *equivalent*, or *better*; for he never said to any pious, praying *person, family, or society, Seek ye me in vain**. The service of *G O D* is no *lost* labour: It is not like the worship of *idols*, a vain and *fruitless* homage; but is always attended with its peculiar pleasures, and brings its own profit and reward with it: To this the Psalmist gives in *his* experience and testimony; [*It is good for me to draw near to G O D*†;] and the saints in every age have found it so: They have met with *G O D* in the *assembly*, as well as in the *closet*; and found the comfort of this promise in the *publick*, as well as *private*, exercises of *G O D*'s worship.

AND as the *Old Testament* writings are full to this purpose, so likewise are the *New*. Passages in both are very *numerous*: And tho' it would be *tedious*, as well as *needless*, to produce them in order; yet, as the argument is of some importance, you will excuse me, if I insist the longer upon it.

D I D

* Isa. xlv. 19.

† Psal. lxxxiii. 28.

DID GOD promise to meet the *Israelites* in all their holy convocations, and where-ever they offered sacrifice, (in the wilderness, or in *Canaan*?) the very same, in effect, he promises to all true Christians under the gospel: They are *his* people *now*, as the *Jewish* nation was *formerly*, and have an equal claim to the *benefit* of this promise. — Accordingly, our Blessed Lord assures us, in the plainest terms, of his *constant* presence with the church in every age; *Lo, I am with you alway*, [*παροι τὰς ἡμέρας*, every day,] *even unto the end of the world* *. That this promise extends, in some measure, to Christian ministers and their people *still*, (tho' it concerned the apostles and first disciples more immediately,) is, I believe, pretty generally allowed. Our Saviour had just been appointing a gospel-ministry, (to disciple the nations, and raise churches;) and immediately he subjoins this kind promise, not only to encourage *them*, (we may suppose,) who should from time to time be *employed* in this ministry, but all those who should *attend upon* it: The reason of the thing extends to both; nor is it wholly confined to the first ages: *Lo, I am with you*, — to *authorize*, and *succeed* you, in this work; and to carry the blessings of my kingdom into *all places*, where-ever you shall travel and teach in my name. — And thus he is with us in our religious assemblies now, and in all places, where he is *called upon in truth*. Nay, some have thought,

* Mat. xxviii. 20.

thought, “ that he was formerly present with
 “ the church under the Old Testament, and
 “ that all those sensible and illustrious tokens
 “ of the Divine presence were then given im-
 “ mediately by the *Logos*, the Son of G O D,
 “ according to the ordinary way wherein G O D
 “ works : And he that afterwards dwelt in our
 “ flesh, seems to have been the person, who of
 “ old was peculiarly present in the tabernacle
 “ and temple ; and upon other occasions where-
 “ in G O D is said to have appeared to men*.”

—— It is certain, however, that we have his spiritual and *gracious* presence with us, at this day : This is promised to all true worshipers, in every place, under the *gospel*. The words of our Saviour to his apostles, (tho’ on a special occasion,) seem, I think, very much to encourage an *agreement*, or concord, in social worship † : *If two of you, says he, shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven : He will accept your endeavours, and they shall not be in vain ; for where two or three are gathered together, [or, agree together to ask any thing,] in my name, [or, for my sake,] there am I in the midst of them.* He gave an example of this immediately after his *resurrection* ; *when the disciples were assembled together, — came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you ‡.* And since his *ascension*, he is present with us in *spirit* : This he has
 promised

* *Vide Peirce’s Sermon. xi.*

† Mat. xviii. 19, and 20.

‡ John xx. 19.

promised to supply the want of his *bodily* presence ; and we are encouraged to expect it, more especially, in the *solemn exercises of religion*. Wheresoever we meet in *his name* ; by his *authority, warrant, or approbation* ; in obedience to his *command*, and with a view to his *glory* ; he will be *with us*, to speed our petitions, and accept our services. As he is graciously present with every serious humble Christian, so he will more eminently bless, with the fruits of his presence, the assemblies of the faithful, be they never so *small*. — And parallel to this is another passage, where he is said to *walk in the midst of the golden candlesticks*, or seven *Asiatic churches* *.

As *Jehovah*, the *GOD of Israel*, formerly dwelt between the cherubims, in the tabernacle and temple, so doth our Lord, in the midst of the churches, at this day : even as the sun is placed in the center, to influence its planets with light and heat. All the grace and influence, which his churches feel, is derived from Him, the *sun of righteousness*, that *true light*, which *enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world* † : He is *all in all* in the Christian church ; and all our light and advantages come from *Him*, either *immediately*, or thro' the *ministration*

* Rev. ii. 1.

† John i. 9. Or, who *coming* into the world enlightens every man, who *receives* or *follows* him ; see *chap. viii. 12*. He is the light of men, the light of life, as he gives us the knowledge of life eternal, and of the way that leadeth to it.

stration and agency of *his Spirit*: This is the *grand blessing* of the gospel, and the *chief glory* of the Christian worship in every place. We read, that when the apostles *were all with one accord in one place, they were filled with the Holy Ghost* *. This was an *extraordinary* dispensation, and proper to that age: Our Lord was then present in a singular and most miraculous manner; and by the continual assistance, and *ordinary* operations of the same Spirit, he has promised to be with us still, and with all his true disciples, (where-ever they shall meet with *one accord in his name*,) even to the end of the world †.

I MAY observe too, that some have thought it of great weight in this matter, and a good argument for a special, eminent presence of GOD in places of publick worship under the gospel, that the *angels* are represented as waiting, and giving their attendance there. The angels were his train and retinue formerly: They waited upon him in the *Shechinah*, as many think ‡, and

* Acts ii. 1, 4. † Vid. Dr. S. Clarke's Sermons, vol. v. pag. 269, and 354.

‡ The Divine presence, (says *Bishop Patrick*,) according to the constant style of the holy scripture, is signified to us by the presence of angels, who are his attendants and ministers, and are therefore probably called *the eyes of the Lord*; (*Zech. iv. 10. Rev. v. 6.*) Hence it is that holy men looked upon themselves as under the inspection of angels, to whose presence, as GOD's ministers, (and signifiers of *his* presence,) they ought to have a great regard: This is the sense of that place, *Eccles. v. 6.* Vid. his *Posthumous*

and executed his commands ; or, they were the *ministers* of his presence, as the cherubims of glory were illustrious *symbols* of it : Their very posture over the *mercy-seat* seems to imply the presence of the angels in our religious assemblies. We cannot doubt but they were eminently present in the sanctuary *of old*, as a signification of GOD's presence there : And the apostle, I think, very plainly intimates, that they are *still present* in places of publick worship, when he is admonishing the Christian women to behave with reverence and decency in such places, *because* of the *angels* *. — It is certain, however, that GOD is engaged to be there, in a more especial manner, where his *people* are : He has promised his presence, (as I said before,) to every private Christian, every *good* man ; and, when a number of these meet together for his worship and honour, they have the best encouragement, and the strongest security, that he will be *with them*, and bless his word

humous Discourses, Serm. xvii. pag. 487, -8. — And, to the same purpose, *Mr. Mede* observes, that the presence of GOD in one place more than another, consists in his retinue or attendants. A king is there, where his court is : And so GOD is there *specially present*, where the angels keep their station ; which is the meaning of that phrase, *the gate of heaven*, or, heaven's court ; *that* being the place, where kings and senators used to sit, attended by their guards and ministers : And hence the church, or place of publick worship, has been sometimes called, the palace of GOD, the place of angels, &c. *Vid.* his *Comment.* on Gen. xxviii. 17. also *Dr. Hammond's Annot.* on 1 Cor. xi. 10.

* 1 Cor. xi. 10.

word and ordinances to them.—And what strengthens the argument, is,

3. *THE experience and testimony* of the saints in all ages. This explains the sense, and confirms the promise in my text, and is very agreeable to what I have remarked under the former head. *All the promises* which G O D hath made to his people shall be fulfilled in the best and *wisest* manner: And those, especially, that wait upon him in publick ordinances, from a right principle and with a serious spirit, shall be sure to find their *account* in it. The true worshipers of G O D have often met with Him in the sanctuary, and *communed with Him* there: They *have*, as it were, *seen his glory*, and felt his grace, in the publick assemblies, more than in other places, or in their private retirements. And as these are so many instances in which the promise has been fulfilled; so they are a great encouragement to all pious upright worshipers at this day. If this promise has been made good to *others*, we have the greater encouragement to plead it *ourselves*, and to wait the accomplishment of it in our solemn attendances upon publick worship.

I T will signify little to alledge, that good men have sometimes been favoured with more of G O D's presence in their *private* devotions. Doubtless they *have*: (For the promise is not limited, as I said before, to any *one* place :) And yet I would observe, that it is more usually

ally and eminently fulfilled in places of publick worship, and where the ordinances of the gospel are duly administered; these being the ordinary and appointed means by which GOD *blesteth* a people. It is in his own house, *ordinarily*, that he maketh the most suitable provision, and the best entertainment for them. *Here* he hath it in greater order, plenty, and variety; and they may expect, for the most part, a greater share of his presence and blessing: The saints in all ages have found it so, and a general experience confirms it. Their *graces*, and their *comforts*, have been greatly promoted by their attendance at the house of GOD. Here their doubts have been resolved, their fears scattered, and their temptations most effectually vanquished: This has always been the place of *audience* and *advice*, as I may call it, in matters of a spiritual concern: Here GOD's people meet and consult Him; here he receives their homage or worship; and he often does more in return to their *publick* than *private* petitions.

AND as their experience and encouragement, in this matter, have been sometimes very great and singular; so, for this reason, they have always preferred *publick* to *private* worship. Witness the many *ardent* expressions of the pious *Psalmist* to this purpose: *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for*

the living GOD. And again, A day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my GOD, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. And very emphatical are those words: One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple†.*

AND this has, doubtless, been the sense of a great many others, and the reason of that commendation and *preference* which they have always given to the house of GOD. They have *tasted* and *seen* that GOD is gracious, as well as the Psalmist here; and this has sometimes filled them with inward strength, and overflowing joy. He has often met with them in the sanctuary, and answered them *with good words, and comfortable words*; and they have been forced to say, as *Jacob*, or *the disciples*, once did: *Verily GOD is in this place‡: It is good for us to be here ||.*

To conclude this head; How dear was the house of GOD to the *primitive* Christians, and to many of our pious *ancestors*, who had not the freedom of publick worship, as we have, but were driven into corners! They were ready to serve GOD, from a principle of conscience and sense of duty, whatever it cost them, and met

* Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2, 10. † Psal. xxvii. 4. ‡ Gen. xxviii. 16. || Mat. xvii. 4.

met together in *any place*, as opportunity offered. Their safety, their liberty, and their *lives* were not so dear to them, as the advantage and pleasure of social worship. They had frequent experience that GOD was *with them*, and the promise in my text was their great encouragement and support. He was graciously nigh to them in all their *hazardous* meetings, (as he was with the *Israelites* in the wilderness,) and did remarkably own and bless his worship and ordinances to them. — And have not some good persons, I say, the same *relish*, and the same *experience still*? Is not the word of the LORD as *precious* and dear to many, as *ever*? Are not publick ordinances their great refreshment, solace, and joy; and even more than their *necessary food*? They have often met with unexpected *comforts*, special *assistance*, and great *enlargement* in holy duties, and been carried towards heaven in the exercises of faith, love, and joy. — And, if we add *this* to the other particulars before-mentioned, the validity of this promise will further appear, and the encouragement it affords be as great as ever: It remains upon record, as a *word* that GOD will always *remember*, and in which his people will have *cause* to rejoice.

UPON *the whole*. As it is fit and just that the great Lord of the world should be publicly owned, honoured, and worshiped by all that know and love him; and as Christians have need of such assemblings together, for mutual

acquaintance and increase in holiness, peace, and love; so it is but reasonable to expect that the Great G O D should afford his *presence* and blessing to such persons, when they assemble together upon a religious design, and for the exercises of solemn worship. The free concurrence of *many*, in the exercises of piety and charity, will be much to the honour of G O D, and for the advantage and credit of the church: Their united strength and interest will *avail much*; and their example and presence be a mutual spur to *love, and to good works*. And, *especially*, I would observe, that we have *then* the *greatest* reason and encouragement to hope that G O D will be *with us*, when we assemble together, (as the first disciples and primitive Christians did,) with a spirit of love and unity, *with one heart and one soul**. The G O D whom we worship, is a lover of peace and concord; and (as I have suggested already,) nothing will invite his presence more, than the exercise and prevalence of such a temper. *Jerusalem was a city compact together*†: It was not more famous for the regularity of its buildings, than for the unity and consent of its worshipers, *the tribes of Israel*. This is the strength and glory of the *Christian church*; the only cement, and greatest blessing of any society; and the best security, (or strengthening,) to any interest whatever. The promise in my text, and the whole current of scripture, is highly favourable to those that cultivate such

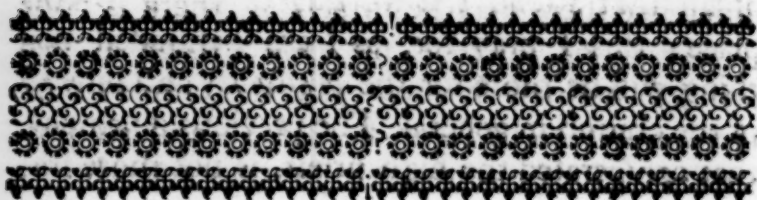
* Acts iv. 32.

† Psal. cxxii. 3, 4.

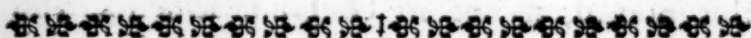
a temper. . May this be the *ambition* and *care* of all that attend the worship of G O D in this place ; this I pray for, as I am persuaded nothing will be more for the *prosperity* and *interest* of the church in general. The precious ointment, that consecrated the high-priest, is not more fragrant and delightful ; or, the dew of *Hermon* more necessary for the parched mountains, than peace and concord is for men of every rank and character. And where should such a spirit as this prevail, if not in *Christian* societies, and amongst the disciples of our common Lord ? I allude to that pleasing and beautiful description which the Psalmist gives us of this matter*, and with which I conclude my discourse at present : *Behold how good and pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity ! It is like the precious ointment, which consecrated the high-priest : Or, as it follows in the last verse of that psalm, It is as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountain of Zion ; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.*

* Psal. cxxxiii.





S E R M O N IV.



E X O D. XX. 24.

— *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will blefs thee.*

 I HAVE now gone thro' the several heads proposed, and considered the argument for publick worship somewhat largely: It remains that I deduce some *corollaries* from what has been said, and *improve* the subject.

COROL. I. If all places of worship under the gospel are alike, and the presence of GOD is promised to one as well as another, then there is no such a thing as *real* holiness in any place. This might be a reason sufficient for appropriating the worship of GOD to that place rather than to any other: But to *suppose* such

such a thing is the grossest absurdity. Whatever difference there may be in *persons*, there is none in *places*; or, there is no such a thing as real *intrinsic* holiness in them, let the employment they are put to be never so *sacred*; and all pretensions of this kind must be vain and chimerical. *Shiloh*, formerly, was as holy and good a place in itself, when the ark of G O D's presence had left it, as *Kirjathjearim*, whither the *Philiſtines* had taken it. There was no difference in *this respect*: Nor did the Divine presence itself ever so far alter the nature of things, as to make one place more holy than another in this sense. Even his *glorious* presence in the tabernacle and temple could not be said to communicate any real holiness to those places. This would subvert the very nature of things, and contradict the general apprehension, reason, and understanding of mankind. Can any one imagine that G O D chose a *threshing-floor* to raise the temple upon, because that place was more *holy* than any other? Or, that his *choice* of this place did impart any positive *sanctity*, any new and sacred quality or virtue into it more than it had before? Or, can we suppose, that because our Saviour sometimes preached to his disciples on a mountain, out of a ship, or by the sea-side, that therefore these places were either more holy than others, because he made choice of them; or, were more holy afterwards than they were before? We may as well believe the monstrous doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, that a bit of senseless paste is a real man, or human body,

as

as believe that any place of worship whatever is *really* holy: The absurdity is much the same: The one is as repugnant to all sense and reason as the other; and the nature of things must be as much altered and changed in the one case, as in the other.

THE plain truth is, (as *St. Jerome* hath observed on another argument,) nothing can be properly holy, but what hath sense and reason, and feareth GOD. Moral and free agents are the only *subjects* capable of an *inherent* * holiness, nor are any *actions* properly holy and religious but such as relate to the *natural* worship of GOD, as *prayer, praise*, and the like. And it is for want of observing this distinction, that some have run into so many fanciful notions, and absurd practices in religion. Hence they have ascribed (I know not what sanctity,) to things that have only an *accidental* relation to the worship of GOD, and which they themselves have made appendages to religion, without any authority or warrant from scripture: Hence have so many things been *called* holy, and many of them *treated* with a superstitious veneration, as if they were *really* so †. — If it
was

* No *Protestant* that I have heard of, says *Dr. Hammond*, [*I wish all could concur in the same observation,*] affirms this of any created *thing*, but only of *persons*, as GOD in the highest degree, and *saints*, in a lower and imperfect degree, by way of communication from Him. See his *Tracts; of Superstition, sect. 49.*

† V. 9. Such as holy water, holy ground, holy vestments, holy reliques, &c. And it is well known what a
super-

was not too great a mispence of time, I might easily shew, how far this false notion of holiness has carried some persons, even to a senseless idolatry, and blind veneration for meer trifles.——

But it is sufficient to observe at present, that no *place* has any such holiness, for the sake of which, we should pay a religious veneration or regard to it †: The first disciples, and primitive christians, met together in any place, as opportunity offered, *viz.* by the river-side ||, in fields and deserts, in ships, or inns; nor did they esteem one place more holy than another, or attribute a real holiness to any. In times of persecution, or on special emergencies, they scrupled not to meet in *any place*: But when the state of their affairs would permit, (in times of *liberty* and peace,) they chose the most *settled* and convenient places they could for publick worship, called *churches*; but never imagined there was any such holiness in them, as made their services more acceptable to GOD, than if they had been performed elsewhere. To this purpose we have the testimony of several writers in the second and third centuries*.——

So

superstitious regard has been sometimes paid to consecrated stones and timber, churches and church-yards; with many such instances of childish weakness and ignorance. See this matter very ingeniously censured in a late pamphlet: *Episcopal and Priestly Claims freely examined*, pag. 35,—8.

† And he that believes or practises *otherwise*, may be fitly called, in the language of a modern writer, the *simple fanatick*. *Old Whig*, vol. ii. N^o 76.

|| Acts xvi. 13.

* Vid. *Enquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church*, book ii. chap. 7.

So that the place itself is an indifferent circumstance, and we should not lay too great a stress upon it. That which recommends one rather than another is the *conveniency*, not the *sanctity* of it. And this, by the way, should teach us what regard is to be had to places of worship now, and to our choice of them. A plain decency should be consulted, without doubt. The *Israelites* in the wilderness, for some time, made use of *earthen* * altars, (as in the former part of the verse wherein is my text,) but when they came to be more fixed and settled, the tabernacle was erected, after that the temple, and a great many private synagogues: And these were severally built, the latter † especially, not with a view to the *holiness* of them, as I now said, (or of the ground whereon they stood;) but only to the *convenience* and *decency* of them. But then,

COROL. II. There is now no difference betwixt places of worship and other places, except that of a *decent separation*, made so by human pleasure and choice. Nor is there any such *relative holiness* belongs to them as did to the

* G O D might so order it, as one observes, to make a conspicuous difference betwixt them and idolaters, who used much cost and curiosity about their altars; or rather, it may be, to remind them how much more he regarded the inward holiness, than the outward pomp of their devotions.

† There was a special and Divine appointment with respect to the *former*, which somewhat alters the case, and yet even this did not impart any real holiness to them. See *Serm. i. pag. 8.*

the *vessels* of the tabernacle, or to all those things that were formerly set apart for the worship of G.O.D, or separated to holy uses. In such a sense as this, no place of worship under the gospel dispensation can be holy.

THE peculiar *respect* which PLACES, &c. bore to G.O.D and his immediate service, by his express appointment, rendered them holy in a *relative sense* under the *Mosaic* œconomy *; but no such thing to be found in the Christian doctrine.

THE institution of Jesus has left no mark of holiness on any one place more than on another: So that to talk of *holiness of buildings* now, or of the *consecration* of them, is not only unwarrantable, but expressly contrary to the sentiment conveyed by our Lord; *Neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father.*—— The subjects of Jesus, being a *kingdom of priests*, where-ever they worship, a number of them do make a *church*; for their worship being spiritual, and according to that substantial plan of truth delivered in the gospel, such the Father *seeketh* to worship him: And therefore, they may most assuredly depend on his presence and blessing.

PLACES then cannot be looked upon by us as having in them any kind of holiness: Nor
can

* Lev. xxi. 8. xxii. 15. Mat. xxiv. 15. Exod. xxviii. 36.

can we, even in *idea*, give them any preference, but what arises from conveniency ; that is, from their being more commodiously fitted for the assembling Christian people, who are themselves sanctified by their being separated for the services of an holy G O D, thro' Christ.

To add no more, under this Corollary: The *relative* holiness which *places* and *things* had under the *Jewish* dispensation, arose from the appointment or extraordinary appearance of G O D in any place. I call it *relative*, because whenever there was no such appointment, the place could not be holy.

COROL. III. Notwithstanding that there is now no *local* glory, by means of which, *places*, &c. may derive a *relative* holiness, yet the gracious presence of G O D, or the fuller discovery of his mercy and goodness in Jesus Christ, does more than supply such want. The state of things is, no doubt, very much altered: The visible outside glory is gone; and we are not to expect it under the gospel; but the *greater* glory *remains*: And what is this, but the *presence* of Christ with us, (in the revelation and ministry of the gospel, and in the standing influences of the Holy Spirit?) Nor, was there any thing under the *legal* dispensation of greater moment or account than this. And, perhaps, that visible glory which filled the places of worship formerly, might be considered as *typical* of a moral spiritual

tual *Shechinah* and glory under the gospel, of that greater measure of light, life, and comfort that devout men are favoured with in *gospel-worship*. The people of G O D under the law were in their minority or nonage*: The outside of his worship was then glorious; and he was pleased to indulge them in that which would please their *senses*: But, (now they are come to riper age,) he does not allow of any such pompous and ceremonious worship. The glory is *spiritual*; and the gospel *prescribes*, and *encourages* nothing, but what is so: nothing, I mean, but what is consonant to the nature of G O D, and has a fitness to promote a holy temper and life, which is the great design of Christianity.

AND this is that *glory of the second temple*, which the prophet tells us should *be greater than that of the former* †, even the pure and spiritual worship of the gospel. The passage refers, more immediately, to Christ's *personal* appearance in *Herod's temple* ‡; which was a greater

* Gal. iv. 1, 3.

† V. Hag. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

‡ Tho' this was strictly and literally the *third* temple of the *Jews*; yet it is plain, that the *Jewish* and *Christian* writers always speak of it as the *second*, accounting this and *Zerubbabel's* but one. And all the time there *was* a temple, (from its first building under *Cyrus* to the last fate of *Jerusalem*,) it was always called, under every change and alteration, the *second temple*. And the reason is pretty apparent; for, tho' *Herod the Great* took it down to the very foundations, in order to enlarge and embellish it; yet this was not properly a *demolition* of it with a ruinous

greater glory than *Solomon's* temple could ever boast of, notwithstanding all its ornaments and riches: But his *spiritual* presence and worship may be also intended, as consequent upon the former. The design of our Lord's appearance was to introduce another and *better* dispensation than that of *Moses*; not so magnificent and glorious in some respects, but of far greater excellence and value in others, and never to be changed or altered. And this is the glory of the *Christian church*, of that *second* and more extensive *temple*, (if I may call it so,) and of *every place* where the true knowledge and worship of GOD is found. We have not, indeed, such outward and visible marks of GOD's presence with us, as the *Israelitish* church enjoyed: The *Shechinah* is long since departed and gone; the *urim and thummim*, the *holy fire*, the *spirit of prophecy*, the *ark of the testimony*, and all *carnal* ordinances are now ceased: The *latter* temple under the *Messiah* has nothing of this sort to glory in: And yet we have some advantages *peculiar* to ourselves, in clearer light, and greater influence: We are more strictly obliged to inward purity, and spiritual worship; and have the greatest encouragements and helps we can desire under this last and *best dispensation* of Divine grace: The presence, and headship of the Redeemer, is all in all, and makes up the want of every thing else. — I shall close this
head

design, but by way of *reparation*; nor did it *lie* in ruins, as when *Nebuchadnezzar* destroyed it. Vid. *Lightfoot on the Temple*, chap. xl. sect. 2.

head with the reflection of a judicious and noted writer upon the passage now cited *.

“ Tho’ there is no silver and gold in the temple, and it is not enriched and adorned with beautiful appearances and costly furniture, which was the case of the latter temple; yet if it is filled with the glory of the Divine presence, it will be more glorious than one which is so, and the glory of the one will be greater than that of the other. The plainest and meanest place of worship shining in the *beauties* of true *holiness*, and where Christ is present in the midst of it, is more truly honourable, than the most stately building, and pompous service upon earth. The *personal* presence of the Messiah was a greater glory to the latter temple, than all the riches and state of the former: And the *spiritual* presence of Christ, and the gracious effusion and influence of his Spirit, in Christian assemblies, is a greater glory to the Christian church, than the mere personal presence of Christ in the *Jewish* temple. The dispensation of the gospel is *rather glorious*, and *much more glorious*, upon this account; and *even that which was made glorious, had no glory, in this respect, by reason of the glory which excelleth.*” There was something very amiable and beautiful in the ordinances of the tabernacle, and much more of the temple; but they

G 2

had

* Vid. Dr. W. Harris’s Discourse on the *Messiah*, pag. 505,-6.

had no glory in respect of the *evangelical* dispensation ; *for if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious* *. The latter does not barely *superfede* the former ; but, as a greater light maketh a lesser seem as none, so the *Mosaic* ministration of the law had, as it were, no glory, being *clouded* or *eclipsed* by the glory of the gospel.

AND from *hence* it is, that all places of Christian worship may be esteemed holy ; forasmuch as where-ever G O D cometh to a people, and blesteth them ; or Christ himself is graciously present with them, *that place*, whatever it be, is an *holy* place. Hereupon it will follow,

COROL. IV. The more holy, serious, and devout the worshipers of G O D are in any place, the more they may hope for his presence, and the happy fruits of it. It is the holiness of worshipers, that invites the presence of an holy G O D amongst them ; and the *more holy*, the *more happy* they are, in the enjoyment of his presence and favour.

T H E R E were degrees of holiness formerly, which rose higher, in proportion to the proximity, or *nearness*, of any thing to the *Shechinah*, or Divine presence †. Hence we read of the

* See 2 Cor. iii. 8, 10, 11.

† — Quia sacrarium intimum coeli supremi simulacrum erat, & quidem Majestatis Dei proprium quoddam pene-

the *holy*, and the *most holy* place : Thus the *inward court* of the temple was counted more holy than the *outward* : And the case was the same, as to *persons* : The priests, [*īspēs*,] as the word imports, were *holy men* ; more holy than the *laity* or common people, and especially the high-priest, who had the privilege of entering into the *holy of holies* *.

AND so it is, in respect to G O D's presence now : As different societies have more or less of real sanctity, or true piety, amongst them ; they are more or less favoured with G O D's gracious presence in publick worship : And the *more of this presence* is afforded, the *more holy* such places are, in this relative sense. — So that the notion we form of the holiness of *places* now, should depend *altogether* upon the holiness of *persons* ; or, (which is much the same thing,) upon the presence of an holy G O D in them : This is, doubtless, more considerable in some societies,

penetrable, ideo locus quisque sanctuarii, eo sanctior a Judæis habitus, quo sacrario ei propinquior erat. Vid. *Outram de Sacrif. lib. i. cap. 3. sect. 8.* — Itidem, sacrificiorum alia *sacra sacerrima*, alia *sacra levia*, Judæis dicta sunt. [The sacrifices that were eaten *within* the sanctuary were accounted *most holy* ; those that were eaten in the city, or in any part of the camp of *Israel*, *less so*.] Vid. *ibid. cap. 14. sect. 6.*

* And it is observable, that, by the rules of the law, things immediately dedicated to G O D's service did convey some degree of holiness to common things that touched them : So the altar sanctified the gift that was laid upon it, (*Exod. xxix. 37.*) and whatsoever touched the flesh of the sin-offering was holy ; *Lev. vi. 27.* See *Hag. ii. 12, 13, 14.*

societies, than in others; and, I may venture to say, is always vouchsafed according to the purity, peace, and harmony, that obtain amongst them.

COROL. V. What has been said may direct us, as to the best and most proper manner of *consecrating* houses, or places of worship; and will help us to *form and settle a true notion* of this matter. The temple had a consecration by Divine *appointment*, and was set apart by particular rites and ceremonies of purification, (as I observed in the beginning,) and the Divine presence was there exhibited after a very sensible and illustrious manner: But there is no such way of consecration as this to be practised, or expected, under the gospel: This is entirely ceased, together with the tabernacle and temple service: And where any pompous rites or ceremonies are made use of in this case, which are not appointed by GOD, as formerly; they are not only unwarrantable; and quite contrary to the simplicity of the gospel; but must pass for *farce* and *solemn mockery* with men of understanding and piety. What could be more *superstitious*, for instance, or even *ridiculous*, than *Archbishop Laud's* consecration of *Catharine Cree-Church*, and several others, which I need not mention? Can any wise or thinking person ever imagine that such childish mimicry, as I may call it, should render any place or building more holy than it was before; or be of any value or efficacy, to make the worship *a jot* the more

more acceptable? Hath GOD himself seen fit to abolish and lay aside the consecrated places of his own appointment? And is there any pretence of authority, under the gospel, for *making* other places holy as *they* were; or even *attempting* it in any such *manner*, as was prescribed and practised under the law*? What can

* Whatever groundless notions and practices might obtain, as to this point, it is plain that the first and purest ages were unacquainted with them. — We must own, indeed, that the wisdom and piety of the first Christians thought it not enough barely to devote their churches to the publick services of religion, unless they also set them apart with solemn rites of a formal dedication: Being built and beautified, (so far as consisted with the ability and simplicity of those days,) they sought to derive a greater value and esteem upon them by some peculiar consecration; but not on the score or pretence of any peculiar extraordinary sanctity that was consequent upon it, or (by this means) imparted to them: Nor does it appear, that the rites and ceremonies which they made use of upon these occasions, (as *Eusebius* relates them,) did at all favour of that fond superstition and pompous formality which latter ages have run into. No footsteps to be found of the consecration of churches, in any approved writer, till the reign of *Constantine*. Vid. *Dr. Cave's Prim. Christian. part i. chap. 6.* — The *Papists* (it must be owned,) have carried this matter a great deal further than many of the Protestant churches: And I cannot but think, with a late ingenious writer, that “ Whatsoever fooleries and ridiculous rites or “ notions are found amongst *them*, our wiser brethren in “ the Church of *England* do not, cannot believe them to “ be of any value or importance, in order to make the “ worship more acceptable to GOD.” And (in another place,) “ It must be confessed, (says he,) that some of the “ forms of expression which have been used in *consecra- “ tions*, and applied to new-erected chapels and churches “ in our nation, do carry too evident airs or appearances “ of superstition, as tho’ men could put holiness into them:

can any fanciful rites, gestures, sprinklings, or benedictions (when pronounced or practised by the greatest *ecclesiastic* upon earth, and with all the solemn and important airs of priestly habit or authority) signify, towards the making any place holy? — I may add: What can any glittering *ornaments* avail, in this case: Can crosses, paintings, images, altars, (or a few distinguishing modes of worship,) consecrate any church, or sanctify any place unto GOD and his worship? It should be well considered by those who have an affection, or fondness, for these things, whether the Divine presence is more effectually *secured* by them; or, whether GOD has any where promised his *special presence only* to those who make use of them. Nay, it is well, if these things (with *many*,) do not stand in the room and *stead* of it; and, as they are a stumbling-block to some, others do not abuse them to superstition, and lower degrees of idolatry*. It is pretty plain, that the worship of images first crept into the church, after some such manner as this. The common people have been often deluded and ensnared by this means;

“ But we suppose, these things were some of the reliques of
 “ the *Popish* religion that were not quite swept away when
 “ the *Reformation* brought in better Christianity.” *Vid.*
Dr. Watts on the subject of *Holiness*, *disc.* iii. p. 116, 119.

* I hope, I may recite to this purpose, without any offence, the words of a learned and venerable Prelate: “ Altho’ the *gross* idolatry of Popery (says he,) be taken away from amongst us, yet the corruption cleaveth still to the hearts of many, as may be seen in them that make *courtesy* to the *chancel* where the *high altar* stood.” *Usher’s Body of Divinity.*

means; whilst, (it is well known, that) persons of greater light and understanding, but less *simplicity*, have made an handle and advantage of it. Things of this kind, G O D knows, have been too much *idolized*; and, standing so closely connected, (as some imagine,) with the Divine presence in places of worship, they have been tempted to reverence and adore them: And, it need not be said, how much the sentiments and practice of the vulgar, (in this, and many other instances,) have been countenanced by the *Romish clergy*, in order to advance their own reputation, wealth, and power.

BUT to return: It may, I think, be easily demonstrated, that the rites or methods of consecration now mentioned, are no ways *proper or necessary*; and are so far from answering the end, that they cannot be said to deserve the name. — The holiness of places, as I said before, depends upon a Divine presence in them; and any place of worship is consecrated, where this is secured, or enjoyed. Now, it is certain, that G O D is graciously present with *every* holy person, and holy society; and has promised to be with us, in all our acts of devotion in *every place*, where they proceed from an upright and an honest heart: It therefore follows, that the presence of G O D, (his holy and gracious presence, which truly consecrates any place,) is not *here* or *there*: It is not confined to this church, or that; and those that were never set apart, by any such pompous rites and ceremonies,

monies, may be as much favoured with it as others: And if so, they are as *truly* and *really consecrated*: All the valuable ends that can be proposed by the most formal and solemn consecration, are answered in them: And, consequently, where any of the said rites or usages are practised, they are altogether *unnecessary*: They have no significancy or weight in them, nor can any good end be answered by them.

AND, as they are by no means *necessary*; so no pious, sober, judicious person can think them at all *proper* or *expedient*. It is evident they *can* answer no valuable purpose; but they *may*, (as I hinted before,) serve a very bad one. This is a very obvious remark, and the truth of it appears from too many instances, in former and latter ages. The attention and zeal of many persons have been turned into a wrong channel, and made to center in little things; their devotion and charity, by this means, have been greatly narrowed and confined, the one to a *place*, and the other to a *party*; and they have been led to imagine, that, surely, there is more of the Divine presence, and a greater degree of holiness, attached to *this place*, or to *this way* of worship, than there is to any other. — And, (which is the greatest inconvenience or mischief of all,) it is well if the common people, (who have been always too prone to debase and confine the Divine Majesty in their conceptions of Him,) are not by this means insensibly drawn into idolatry
and

and image-worship *. This I have suggested already ; and would propose it to be considered, whether *these*, and such like things, have not a manifest tendency to corrupt the mind, and to cherish

* For why is idol-worship so offensive to G O D, and so strictly forbidden ? (as an ingenious writer argues ;) is it not chiefly, that it weakens men's belief of the *omnipresence* of the Deity, and represents Him as *confined* more to one place than another ? This must be highly injurious to the honour of G O D, and very offensive to Him : And what is that bowing towards the *Altar* and the *East*, which is practised by many, but a dangerous approach towards this Popish and Pagan worship ? For when the congregation are taught to turn about from the *West* or the *South*, and devoutly worship towards the *East*, how natural is it for them to think, that the G O D whom they worship is more present *there*, than in any other quarter ; for if He were not more present *there*, why should they thus solemnly and constantly turn towards it ? See *Episcopal and Priestly Claims examined*, p. 38. — It has indeed been acknowledged, that to worship towards the place, where there is any *sign* or *specification* of G O D's presence, (or where it is more *demonstrated* than elsewhere,) is no idolatry : So both people and priests, formerly, stood in their several courts, and worshiped with their faces towards the temple, that part in particular, where the *ark* and the *mercy-seat* were : So pious men were wont to *direct* their prayers when they were far distant from it : (See 1 *Kings* viii. 29, 30, 35.) And even when the temple and holy city were destroyed, and the ark of the testimony was gone, they looked and prayed towards the place where it was *wont* to be. And this antient custom or appointment, (as some think,) might be a means to keep the *Jews* from idolatry : All the nations of the world turning towards the *East*, when they worshiped ; but the *Jews* to the *West*, where the holy place was, (as appears by the prophet *Daniel*, chap. vi. 10.) But as there is no such holy place, nor any such notification of G O D's presence in one place more than another, why should any such usage or custom as this, be countenanced and preserved in the Christian church ?

cherish apprehensions, that are derogatory to the honour of G O D, and injurious to the cause of virtue and true religion. They may amuse the mind; but can *profit* nothing: They may tempt and fix the wandering eye; but can never engage the Divine presence.

AND as these methods of consecration are all *ineffectual*, and no way *proper* or *expedient*, but, in many respects, hurtful and inconvenient; so, I *might* observe, that we have *no authority or warrant* for them in scripture; nor is there any thing in the nature or reason of things to urge in favour of them. — But I must not insist any longer on so *plain* a case. The force of these arguments will farther appear in the sequel of this discourse. All that I would take notice of, at present, is this; *viz.* that the various rites of consecration now mentioned are, *at best*, a needless *formality*, a solemn piece of *pageantry*: It is plain, they too much favour of superstition and *will-worship*; and, I dare say, are more *provoking*, than they can be *pleasing* to an holy G O D. A set and formal observance of these, and such like *rites*, may be *called*, and *deemed*, a consecration of churches, by the ignorant and vulgar part of mankind; but there is, generally speaking, more of superstition than true devotion in it; more of *Judaism* and *Po-pery*, nay, of *Pagan* superstition and idolatry, than of *pure* and *simple Christianity*. Nay, let any *wise* man speak, if there be any thing in the nature, use, or tendency of these things, to make
the

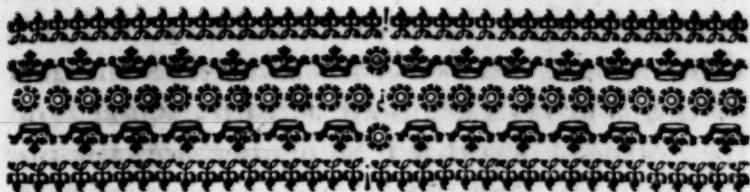
the worship of any place, or people, *a whit* the more acceptable to an holy GOD; or, if the promise in my text is necessarily *tied* to such observances as these. — And yet, there *is* such a thing as *consecration of places*, in a *qualified* sense; or something may be fitly and decently done, on our part, towards the *engaging a Divine presence* with us in our religious assemblies. And this is what I should now endeavour to represent and explain a little distinctly. — But this must be the subject of another discourse.

AT present, may we all learn, rightly to *estimate*, and *judge* of things that pertain to *religion*; to *discern things that differ*; and to exercise a becoming *zeal in things of importance*. It is plain, there is a great diversity of sentiments, as to *some things*, concerning which it is questionable whether they, at all, pertain to religion, as parts of it, or not: And in those that do, the difference also is very great: Some are, confessedly, of greater importance than others. As we should therefore have a care, on the *one side*, how we make any thing a *part of religion* without good reason; so, on the *other*, if we have reason to judge it so, we should not therefore immediately look upon it, as of the *essence of religion*, and of the utmost moment in it. — If, for instance, the things that I have now mentioned, *should*, after all, be deemed by any a *part of religion*, or proper *appendages to it*; doubtless those, who are thus persuaded, ought to pay some regard to them: But then, as these things are *comparatively small*, they can never challenge so great

great a degree of attention and zeal, as if they belonged to the *essentials* of religion. — In all these matters, we should see to it, that our zeal be *wise* and *regular*, both as to the *object*, and the *degree* of it; that it be neither *mistaken*, nor *intemperate*: And, (since there will always be a diversity of *opinion* in these lesser things, and a different *stress* laid upon them,) we should especially see to it, that our *zeal* be tempered with *charity*, that there be a mutual harmony and consistency between them, and that the *former* does not root out and consume the *latter*, or, (instead of warming and heightening our love,) extinguish all tender sentiments and affections towards our fellow-Christians. Pity it is, but the disciples of Christ were better known, by the mutual exercise and discovery of such a temper! How happy would it be for the *Christian world*? How much would it tend to *cure* our divisions; to *strengthen* the common cause of piety and virtue; and, above all, to *secure* the gracious and divine regards, in our *several* assemblies for public worship? For, *sure* I am, “That no particular forms whatever, are so acceptable to “GOD, as the exercise of *mutual charity* under “our different forms.” This is an *eminent* branch of the Christian temper, and what the gospel recommends *above all things* else*: *The end of the commandment is charity*†; and, *without it*, all our different modes and sentiments in religion *will profit us nothing*.

* Col. iii. 14. 1 Pet. iv. 8.

† 1 Tim. i. 5.



S E R M O N V.



E X O D. XX. 24.

— *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*

***** AFTER some considerable time spent
 A upon this subject, beyond my first
 intention, I am now come to the
 ***** *improvement* of it. Several distinct
 corollaries, or inferences, have been deduced
 from it already: And the last that I mentioned
 will admit of some further enlargement; which
 I shall now propose, (with what remains,) as
 a proper and useful application at the close of all.
 It was observed, amongst other things, that
 what has been said may direct us, as to the
 best and most proper manner of consecrating
 houses, or places of worship; and will help us
 to form and settle a true notion of this matter.
 This has been only considered in a *negative*
light :

light : I proceed to speak to it more *directly* ; and shall place it in another and different view. — Now the best and purest manner of *consecration*, (if I may use that term ;) or, that which seems to have *most countenance* from *reason*, and the *state of things under the gospel*, I shall represent in the following manner ; as,

§. 1. WE may be said, in the general, to *consecrate* places of worship, when we *set them apart* for religious uses, and give a *regular and stated attendance* upon the worship of GOD in them : Or, when we chuse, appoint, and make use of them, *as such*. They *cannot* be made holy *in themselves* ; but they *may* be separated from a *common* and *profane* to a *sacred* use and purpose * : And this is all the *consecration*, all the

* So far as any thing, thus separated, is holy, the act of separation itself may be fitly enough called the *consecration* of that thing. We do not, indeed, make use of this name, as some do, when we begin the worship of GOD in any place : But we can readily admit of it in this sense ; [understanding no more by it, than a *separation* or *dedication* ;] which, indeed, is the most general and accepted sense of the word *sanctification*. — Per vocem sanctificationis — ubique intelligitur separatio rei cujusve ad usus sacros, & in primis a profano & communi usu. *Episcop.* — Res enim Deo & religioni dicatæ, e rerum communium & profanarum censu transire, & sanctæ divinæque repente prodire, credebantur. Hæc [*fuit*] consecratio vel dedicatio, &c. *Vid. Spenceri de Legibus Heb. lib. iii. dissert. 3. de Purificationibus & Lustrationibus Heb. cap. 6.* — And no farther than this can any act of ours be said to *consecrate* any thing, or make it holy, as the word signifies.

the holiness, they are now capable of †. Their being devoted to this peculiar use gives them a relative external holiness, but no more: And, for persons to ascribe any other kind of holiness to them, must (as I said before,) be an instance of great weakness and superstition. It deserves observation, that the word [*sanctify*] is very frequently used in this sense, as to persons; and whenever applied to things, times, or places, in no other: Thus GOD is said to hallow, or sanctify any thing, when he ordains or appoints it to an holy use; and men are said to sanctify the same thing, when they use it according to GOD's ordinance or appointment: Or, under the gospel, we ourselves may be said to sanctify places of worship in both senses, and not improperly; i. e. we may now, upon discretion, appoint any place to an holy use or purpose, just

as

† It is certain, there can remain with us no such thing, properly speaking, as a sanctuary or holy place, unless we can prove a *Shechinah* in them. We may consecrate them by forms and rites of religion, and invoke the Divine presence; we may not call them holy in the same sense as the Jewish tabernacle and temple were holy, unless by some means or other, we can introduce a sensible display of the Divinity into them: And therefore we find places of worship under the gospel were chosen without distinction, and without any pretence of holiness. Vid. *Bennet's Christian Orat. chap. ii. sect. 10.* — This matter is well explained by a learned and critical writer. — Est enim loci duplex sanctitas, altera rei, altera autem loci, propria. Ac locum, si ut rem spectes, dedicatio ad Dei cultum sacrat: At vero locum, ut locum, sacrat insignis aliqua Dei præsentia, sive præsentiæ ejus species. *Outram, de Ratione Templi Jerusalemiani, cap. iii. sect. 2.*

as we see fit ; and *make use* † of it accordingly : (For the word [*sanctify*] in its first and *general* notion is the same, whether it be considered as an act of *GOD* or *man* †.)—— I shall consider it *both* ways ; and so take in what, I apprehend, to be the most rational and proper meaning or use of the term, [*consecration* ||,] when applied to places of worship. For *instance* ; we may be said, in the first place, to sanctify, or make a place holy,

(1.) WHEN we set it apart from any *profane* or *common use*, to the *peculiar worship* and service of Almighty *GOD*. The first act of *initiating* and *appropriating* any place to a religious use may be called its consecration ; nor should we ever apply it to any other, without

a

† The word is sometimes used in this sense, as well as the former, and I take it to be a *principal* one : It signifies *differently*, (as a learned critick hath observed,) in several conjugations ; sometimes to devote and consecrate to the service of *GOD* ; and sometimes to use a thing as holy, being already devoted to him : And thus he reconciles those two places, *Exod.* xiii. 2. and *Lev.* xxvii. 26. V. *Bishop Patrick* on the former text.

† The only difference is, that when this separation of any thing is the act of *GOD*, or by his express order and appointment, it is then sanctified in the most strict and proper sense. Thus he sanctified or blessed the *sabbath-day*, and so made it more holy than other days : In like manner he consecrated the *tabernacle* and *temple*, and made them more holy than any other places were *then*, or than any places are *now*. It is *GOD's institution*, or *special presence*, that must sanctify any place, or make it holy.

|| *NB.* By *consecration* so applied, I mean an act of our own, exclusive of any Divine appointment, as will more fully appear hereafter.

a plain necessity, or in cases of emergency. And this is all that the antients meant by the consecration of their churches; tho' the manner and ceremony of doing this was not always exactly one and the same*. If the worship of GOD, and the exercises of religion, are not the *only* or *principal* employment of such places, they *cease* to be holy; because it is this *peculiar* design and use that makes them so †: Nor are they any longer holy, than they are *actually* put to such uses: And even when they are made use of to any *common* or *worldly* purposes, (as is sometimes the case,) they are *not* therefore so far *desecrated*, or profaned, as to be rendered thereby *unfit* for the exercises of solemn acceptable worship ‡; there being no place, under the New Testa-

* Vid. *Bingham's Origines Eccles. lib. viii. cap. 9.* where the author observes, as to the *object* of dedication, that they were consecrated *only to GOD*, and not to any *creature*; that they sometimes bore the *names* of saints, but were never *dedicated* to them, and only served as *memorials* of them; (it being usual with the antients to build their churches over the sepulchres of the martyrs, or in the places where they suffered, or sometimes the relicts of the martyrs were translated into them;) and that from the names of the founders, and other circumstances in their building, they were usually denominated or distinguished one from another.

† Nay, the temple itself, (in our Saviour's time especially,) was *chiefly* reckoned holy on this account, *viz.* as it was appointed by GOD for *holy* uses, and no other. All the parts of it were so far holy, that no *common* business, or *civil* affairs, were to be transacted in it, out of a special reverence and regard to the GOD of *Israel*, who had chosen it to himself, and had made it holy. See *Mark xi. 15, 16, 17.*

‡ Any more than many chapels, *now* in the land, that had never any formal consecration at all. Nay, "as GOD has

Testament, either holy or profane, any longer than it is actually put to an holy or profane use. We are allowed in *any* place to *lift up holy hands*, or offer prayers to G O D.—And yet, as there are some places more peculiarly *suitèd* and *set apart* for this purpose, common prudence and natural decency should teach us, not to apply them to other uses, without some apparent necessity or great convenience. It must be very improper and unseemly to transact any secular affairs of trade or commerce in such places, and much more, any thing that is mean or ludicrous, or would bring the place and worship of G O D into contempt. And accordingly, the antients used them only as the houses of G O D, for acts of devotion and religion; and did not allow of any thing to be done there, that had not some tendency towards piety, or immediate relation to it. But,

(2.) THE

“ no where commanded us, (says the learned *Mr. Pierce*,)
 “ to have the places of our publick worship appropriated to
 “ that use, and no other; so I fear not to say, that it is
 “ very *lawful* to use for the worship of G O D such places,
 “ as are *ordinarily* at other times *applied to other uses*; only
 “ care should be taken to have places of worship as decent
 “ and convenient as may be: And where people’s circum-
 “ stances will not suffer them to compass all that decency
 “ and conveniency that may be desireable, let them not
 “ think that the worshipping of G O D in spirit and truth,
 “ will be ever the less acceptable.” I might also observe,
 (and easily make it to appear,) that the practice of the estab-
 lished church, *in many instances*, does plainly discover an
 agreement with the *dissenters* upon this head, and that their
real opinion and sense of the matter is much the same. See
Mr. J. Peirce’s Reply to Dr. Wells, Letter iii. pag. 59.
His Vindication, part ii. chap. i. compared with *Dr. Watts’s*
Tracts upon Holiness, pag. 120, -1, -2.

(2.) THE principal thing in the business of consecration is, our *using* them as places that are thus devoted or set apart to the service of GOD, by a *stated* and *constant attendance* upon the worship of GOD in them. We should not only see to it, that this is the proper and *distinguishing use*, or the *sole employment* of them, as far as may be; but we should also make a *custom* or *practice* of publick worship, and give our attendance in them *upon all occasions*. — It is the *actual* and *frequent* application or use of them *this way*, that is their best and truest consecration; nor is there, *so properly* speaking, any other: To *devote* them to a particular use, and to *use* them *as devoted*, are *two* things; and the former is nothing without the latter. They are the *people*, as much as the *priest*, that are concerned in *this* consecration: And when a number of serious persons *duly* and *constantly* attend the worship of GOD in any place, they *do more* to engage a Divine presence and blessing than any *initiating* solemn rites, or pretended methods of consecration whatever: For what are any *places of worship*, (or why are they *called* so, indeed,) tho' never so solemnly dedicated to the service of GOD, if a people are slack and careless, and will not afford their *presence* in them? Or what can all the ceremonies of a formal dedication signify or *avail* in this case? It can never be thought, surely, that those persons take the *way* to engage the presence and favour of GOD, (which is all in all, in

any place,) who live in the stated and wilful neglect of any known duty; and especially, of one, which I may venture to pronounce the most *important*, and, generally speaking, the most *advantagious* and *useful* of all others. Nay, I can hardly persuade myself, that there is any *true* or *governing* sense of religion in the mind, where the publick exercises of divine worship are either *wholly neglected*, or but *seldom* and *slightly attended*. Can *he* be deemed an *holy person*, that cares so little for *holy exercises*? Or what notion must that man have of religion, that will scarce bear a publick testimony to it once a week, and is ready to catch at every excuse, (*making the most* of any occurrence, tho' never so trivial,) for absenting himself from publick ordinances? It is plain, whatever his *notions* of religion may be, that his *heart* is too much a stranger to it, and that he never knew the strength and force of its principles.—As ever, therefore, you would consecrate *this*, or *any other* place of worship, be regular and constant in your attendance upon the worship of G O D in it: Or, (*which comes to the same thing, in effect,*) as ever you would shew a becoming and just regard to *religion*, either as it affects the honour of G O D, or your own interests, be persuaded to put in practice, or persist in, this too much neglected duty; and let nothing ever lessen your love and esteem for publick ordinances. These are the grand *preservatives* of religion, as I may call them: Your attendance upon *them*, therefore,

should be *one* evidence, at least, of your regard to *religion* itself; and many times there is not a *greater* evidence of it, (in the *general* estimation and view of the world,) than this.

LET *this*, then, be one instance of your regard to it, tho' not the *only* one: If you have any *real* concern for the *'honour* of religion, or your own *spiritual* improvement, let it appear in your zeal for publick worship. — Let not secular affairs, idle amusements, carnal diversions, or an indolent and slothful spirit, ever interrupt the seasons of devotion, or the time that should be sacred to G O D and religion: Nor let any pretences of *greater knowledge*, or of equal advantages, to be had in private, (as if the performance of some duties in the *family* or *closet* would excuse the neglect, or make up the want of publick worship or instruction; I say, let not any of these things) be ever admitted as an objection or plea in this case; for sure I am, that nothing can excuse the habitual neglect or contempt of so *plain an institution*. The marks of Divine goodness, wisdom, and authority are plainly stamp'd upon it; and the experience and practice of the church, in all ages, recommend it to us. There was formerly a very strict regard had to the publick reading and hearing of the law, and their expositions upon it were so many publick homilies or sermons*.

Our

* Neh. viii. 5, 8. It is a known saying among the *Jews*; He that contemns the solemn assemblies of the church,

Our Lord himself was a preacher to the multitudes, and has encouraged our frequent meeting together for publick worship, by his frequent presence in the synagogue.—But not to insist upon this ; I would only beg leave to observe, that where persons are cold and negligent, and very uncertain in their attendance upon publick worship, without any evident reason or necessity, it argues but *little religion, little concern* about the presence and favour of an holy G O D ; and all pretensions to *holiness*, (whether of persons or places,) are, in this case, but little worth.

§. 2. W H E N, by solemn and fervent prayer, we *invoke* G O D's *gracious presence with us* in any such places, and his *blessing* upon the word and ordinances that are there administered : This is the meaning of the promise, as I have before explained it, and the most *essential* thing in any consecrations whatever : And where this is secured, the great *end* of them is most effectually answered : So that *one method* we should now take is this, to *pray* and to *plead* with G O D, that (according to his promise,) he would *come unto us*, at all the stated and occasional seasons of divine worship
in

church, hath no part in *seculo futuro*. And how strict a regard the *primitive Christians* had to publick worship on the Lord's-day, may be learnt from *church history*, and especially from the *canons* of antient *councils*, which were very severe upon *any* that absented themselves without just cause. Vid. *Cave's Prim. Christ.* part i. chap. 7.

in this place, and *blefs us* in the use of his own appointments ; that he would thus *record* his *name* amongst us, or afford us his *gracious presence* ; which is, now, the *principal*, (or the only) thing that makes *any place* holy : Without this, even the constant and sole employment or use of them in a *religious* way, will signify little.

I HAVE before observed, that the two principal things which consecrated places of worship formerly, are now ceased. We are not to expect that *GOD himself* should either *appoint* such places, (and the rites of consecration,) or *manifest his glory* in them : The gospel dispensation hath made a change in both respects : We *ourselves*, for instance, are now left to chuse or appoint *any place* at discretion, (as I observed under the former head ;) and instead of the *Shechinah*, or outward glory, it is *GOD's gracious * presence* only that we are now encouraged

* This, indeed, is not easily explained : Nor is the *presence of GOD*, now, in one place more than another, easily conceivable by any : And yet, I am so far from calling this a chimerical unintelligible notion, (as some have done,) that I believe the reality and importance of the thing itself, and that there is no more obscurity upon this, than there is upon every dispensation of *GOD's temporal providence*. — I own, it is a difficulty to say, wherein it lies, how it may be discerned, and what are the different measures or degrees of it. *GOD* was equally present in both dispensations, in regard of his *essence* ; but with this difference : his presence was formerly accommodated and brought down to the perception, even of mortal eyes, (as at the promulgation of the law, and the dedication of the temple,) which has been called

raged to hope and pray for: and if we sincerely and heartily seek it, when we assemble together

called by way of distinction, his *majestic* presence; whereas his *gracious* presence, so called, (which is attended with the special effects of his favour, kindness, and *assistance*, whereby he operates upon the minds of men, and is said to dwell with them that are of an humble *contrite* spirit; this, I say,) is invisible and secret, and oftentimes imperceptible. It seems to consist in that particular *providential care*, that is employed about good persons; and especially, in those *divine influences*, which, by means of the word, produce the most happy effects upon the minds of men: Or, (as these are sometimes called the fruits of the *spirit*, and said to be wrought in us by his operation,) it is the same thing with his *spiritual presence*: And hence the gospel, by way of contradistinction, is called the *dispensation of the Spirit*, as it was at first revealed and propagated in the world by his miraculous influence, and as the ministrations and use of it is rendered effectual to the church, in these latter ages, by the standing and ordinary influences of the same Spirit. When, or how long, or in what manner it operates, we cannot easily or certainly determine: The *modus* of G O D's presence is, in a great measure, inexplicable; and the operations of the Spirit are usually so calm and secret, and so congruous to our rational faculties and own endeavours, in a natural way, that they are hardly, if at all, discernable any otherwise than by the *fruits* and *effects* of them: It is hereby, chiefly, that we are to regulate our conceptions, and form a judgment, in this matter. — Thus much, I think, is clear and undeniable, that G O D's gracious presence, now, does not consist, on the one hand, in any visible appearance; nor, usually speaking, in any strong over-bearing impulse upon the mind; nor in any of those extraordinary effects that accompanied the dispensation of the Spirit in the first ages of Christianity: And yet, on the other hand, it is more than the *objective* influence of all revealed truths, or of all the outward actings of Providence: — Or, in other words, it seems to stand, now, in the *ordinary use of gospel means*, and the *common aids of the Spirit with them*; (the more extraordinary measures of it being no longer necessary,

together in any one place, we may be said to *consecrate* that place, so far as this is an act of ours:

ry, since the external revelation of the gospel, and our other means and assistances are so much *greater* than they were formerly;) and this I call that *gracious presence* of GOD which answers, in some measure, to the *Shechinah* of old, and consecrates places of worship under the gospel: And this, indeed, is more truly excellent and valuable, and answers greater and better purposes, in many respects, than that did in the *Jewish* sanctuary. It is not *visible* and *conspicuous*, I own, (nor is the presence of GOD, now, attended with such great and sensible effects, as under the *Jewish* œconomy, or in the beginning of Christianity;) but this is no objection to the thing itself: Nay, we have reason to question, whether GOD's presence was *ever seen*; or whether it is, properly speaking, *visible* with us at all: (*Exod. xxxiii. 20. 1 Tim. vi. 16.*) A spirit is not only without all corporeal extension and figure, but is likewise void of colour, which is properly the object of sight. Even his glorious majestic presence, formerly, was chiefly seen or known by its signs and operations, its attendants and effects; and so is his gracious presence at this day: This is chiefly known by the *tokens* and *effects* of his favour. Thus the ordinances of the gospel are the usual, and the only outward significations of GOD's gracious presence with us in the Christian worship: They are a part of his *name* by which he makes himself known to us; or, they are the *means of grace*, (very fitly so called,) the standing and ordinary means by which GOD *blesteth* a people, or communicates his *grace* and favour to them; and whenever we attend upon them with a right spirit and intention, we are encouraged to expect his influence and blessing to render them effectual. — Let no one then ridicule this doctrine, as if it was a meer *visionary* thing, supported by a warm imagination, and dwelling only in the brains of *enthusiasts*. GOD's gracious presence or influence is something *real*; or, the operations of the Spirit, preparing and assisting men to holy actions, furthering holy habits, &c. is, I think, a doctrine that will stand the test of a sober impartial inquiry, and is as easy to be understood as a great many things in nature

ours: And there is a great deal of *decency* in the thing itself, that we begin the worship of GOD at such places with our *solemn* prayers and addresses to him. — It was in this manner that *Solomon* consecrated the *temple*: For we are told, that when he had assembled all the men of *Israel*, and brought thither the ark and the holy things from *Zion*, he made a solemn and devout *prayer* to GOD upon that occasion. And *this*, amongst other things, is called the *dedication* of the *house of the Lord* †. — And

nature or common *providence*. Why may not the same rules of logic, reason, and good sense obtain in faith and science, in things spiritual and in things natural? A late ingenious writer has observed, that we may form as clear an idea of *grace* as of *force*: His words are these; [and his reasoning is very evident, and applicable in the *present* case;]
 “ Excluding body, time, space, motion, and all its sensible measures and effects, we shall find it as difficult to
 “ form an idea of force as of grace. Grace may certainly
 “ be an object of our faith, and influence our life and
 “ actions, as a principle destructive of evil habits, and productive of good ones, altho’ we cannot attain a distinct
 “ idea of it, separated or abstracted from GOD the *author*,
 “ from man the *subject*, and from virtue and piety its
 “ effects.” *Minute Philosopher*, vol. ii. p. 156.

† 1 Kings viii. 63. In the same manner was GOD invoked by *David* and *Solomon* to enter into the tabernacle or temple, as his habitation or resting-place: *Psal.* cxxxii. 8. *Arise, O Lord, into thy rest: thou, and the ark of thy strength.* (See also *Psal.* xxiv. 7.) — And it is not unlikely, that the *altar*, in the time of *Moses*, was dedicated in some such manner as this: (*Numb.* vii. 88.) They that made their offerings, upon that occasion, made their humble supplications with them; or, at least, the sacrifices themselves were in the nature of supplications: And this is expressly called, the *dedication of the altar*, after that it was anointed, being the first solemn service that was there performed.

— And this, indeed, is the only true and proper notion of *dedication*; namely, when any thing is set apart to the service of GOD by solemn prayer: And when any place, v. g. is afterwards *employed* according to the *intention* and *purport* of such a dedication, this is properly a *consecration*; and *especially*, when we are favoured with GOD's *gracious presence* at all the usual and appointed seasons of our meeting in it: This is a *principal* thing, and of the *greatest importance*, and what we should *always* have *at heart*; as upon this occasion *especially*, so at all times, when we *purpose* to wait upon GOD in *holy convocation*, and for the exercises of solemn worship: We should seek his presence and favour, both *when* we meet, and *before* we meet; — we should do it *separately* and *together*; — and (upon all such occasions, I say,) we should be earnest with GOD, that, according to his promise, he would *come unto* us, and *blefs* us. — We should pray more particularly, “ that his eyes may be *open*, and
“ his ears *attentive* to the *prayers* that shall
“ be *made in this place* *: That he, who *inhabits* the praises of *Israel*, would from time
“ to time accept our offerings, answer our
“ petitions, and make us *glad* with the *light*
“ of his *countenance*. — That he would *multiply* the seed sown, and *increase* the fruits of
“ our *righteousness*. That the words of life
“ which are here dispensed, may be powerful
“ and penetrating, and those who come into
“ our

* 2 Chron. vi. 40.

“ our assemblies may be convinced and judged,
 “ and have the *secrets of their hearts made ma-*
 “ *nifest*, and *confess* that *GOD is with us of*
 “ *a truth**.—And, in a word, that all gospel
 “ ordinances may be attended with a divine
 “ influence and blessing, and become the
 “ *savour of life unto life* to many souls.”——
 In these, and such like petitions, we should be
 importunate with *GOD*, that he would *fulfil*
 his word of promise to us; that he would
grace the solemnities of *this* house with his
 special presence, and *bless* us with all *spiritual*
 blessings: Then will the name of *GOD* be
recorded, and his *glory* seen in his *sanctuary*.
 —— That was a most encouraging and gra-
 cious answer which *GOD* made to the prayer
 of king *Solomon*, and does greatly encourage
 our humble supplications and our prayers to
 him on this occasion †: *The Lord said unto*
him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplica-
tion that thou hast made before me: I have hal-
lowed this house which thou hast built, to put my
name there for ever, and mine eyes and mine
heart shall be there perpetually.—— Let us
plead with *GOD* this promise; that, whenever
 we *meet* together in this place, he would *meet*
 us with a *blessing*, and have his *eye* and his
heart always upon us. If we heartily unite
 in this request, *GOD* will *bear* us, and be
present with us, and will *glorify* the house of
 his *glory* ‡.

§. 3.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 24,-5. † 1 Kings ix. 3. ‡ Isa. lx. 7.

§. 3. WHEN we devote or consecrate ourselves to the service of GOD, and are serious, holy, upright persons, in our prevailing temper and character; we should, in the first place, yield, or give ourselves to the Lord. As this is one thing that concurs to make up the notion of a temple*, so it is one way of consecrating places of worship, or of securing a Divine Presence in them: And, when we have done this, we should look upon ourselves as his†, and not our own; and should employ ourselves accordingly, as his peculiar people, zealous of good works.

OUR bodies should be consecrated to his service, and become the instruments of righteousness; (and not till then are they temples of the Holy Ghost,) not that the body can be the subject

* 1 Cor. vi. 19. Vid. *Whitby in loco*.

† i. e. the Lord's people, devoted to the service and honour of our great Lord and Master. In this sense, the ancient christians called the first day of the week *αυρηανη*, or *die dominica*, that is, the Lord's day; and their places of worship *αυρηανη*, the Lord's houses: And this, according to Fuller, is the true etymology and import of our English word Church. — *Templum christianum*, CHURCH, (aspirate) dicimus pro *Kiirk*: *Kiirk* vero, per syncopen, pro *Kuriak*. Atque haud scio an aptius ullum fere aliud reperiatur nomen, &c. Vid. *Fulleri Miscel. sacra*, lib. ii. cap. 9. — A church is a place peculiarly devoted to the honour of our Lord and Saviour; or an house for GOD and his service, by way of eminence or distinction: So that any building that is set apart for this purpose, may be called a church; and he that seriously and stately serves GOD in any such place, is a good church-man.

ject of holiness, properly speaking; but it is the *instrument* of the soul in holy exercises, and may be employed in many pious and useful purposes to the glory of GOD, and the good of mankind. And, in this case, (as the apostle speaks) it is a kind of *living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable* to GOD, and what every christian should *present* *, or offer up, continually. It was GOD that formed the body at first, that preserves, supports, and keeps it alive every moment; and it is fit that he should have the *glory* of it: And surely it is an argument of *some weight*, that Christ *died* for the body, to redeem and save it: *Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify GOD in your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD's* †.

BUT the *latter* of these should be our *first* and *principal* care; for, it is the *heart*, the spirit of a man, that is the best sacrifice in itself, and gives a value to every other. *Bodily exercise profits little*; nor will the labour of the lip, or knee, or any external services, be accepted, where the heart is wanting. We should serve GOD with our *very best*, and with *all we have*: Then will the Lord be found of us when we seek him with the whole heart, and tender him the service of the whole man.

AND, as this is highly fit and *reasonable* in itself, so it is the best and only way to engage the Divine presence with us at all times, or in any

* Rom. xii. 1. † 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

any place. It is the *upright* person, the truly religious, sober, virtuous, and good man, that GOD hears and *regards* *, and none else. He is present with such in the family and in the closet, in publick and in private ; and, (wherever they are) they *dwell in GOD*, and *GOD in them* †.—And of so much importance is the *habitual* exercise of piety and virtue, (or a righteous and sober life, under the influence of christian principles) that a weekly attendance upon publick worship, will signify little without it. The religion of the *means*, and the *forms* of godliness, are nothing without that inward purity, that substantial piety and goodness, that should influence and regulate the whole life. *True religion* is an uniform and consistent thing ; it lies in a regular and unreserved obedience to the whole will of GOD, so far as we know it ; or in an entire and equal *respect to all* GOD's commands ‡. What is the *worship of GOD* at one time, without the *fear of GOD* at other times ? Or, what will it avail us to serve him on his *own day*, if we *neglect* or *affront* him, and make no conscience of serving him on *other days* ? What is this but an hypocritical and vain religion ?——It is an antient saying (and a very true one ;) *non est vera religio, quæ cum templo relinquitur* ; “ that is no *true religion* “ which a man leaves behind him at church §.” And if so, the *church itself* is no more to him than any other place ; I mean, he has no en-

I

joyment

* Prov. xv. 8, 29. John ix. 31. † John iii. 24.---
iv. 15, 16. ‡ Psal. cxix. 6. § Lactan.

joyment of GOD there: He doth not, cannot meet with that kind acceptance or notice that others in the *same* assembly do; or have that share in the advantage and pleasure of gospel worship: He has no true *taste* or *relish* for it, nor any *claim* to the Divine Influence and Blessing,—*Real and true religion* is never confined to the church, nor does it consist in a *nominal* out-side profession only: It is an *habitual inherent* holiness that GOD requires; and, without this, a mere *relative external* holiness, be it never so plausible or praise-worthy, will profit us nothing. The promise in my text is not made, merely to a *number* of persons assembled together in a *place* of worship, but to *those*, and *those only*, in that assembly, that *seek* and serve him with *the whole heart*: Those that love his sanctuary, and love to *meet* him there, shall find that he is *gracious*: Those that come with a pious and devout mind, with an humble, meek, and teachable spirit, and with a sincere desire to *know* and *do* the will of GOD: Such as these, and only these, have a claim to the promise, and stand fairest for a blessing. It is the sincerity, faith, piety, and *holiness* of *persons*, that GOD chiefly looks at; and he has only promised his presence in *places* where such worshippers are assembled. We have no promise now of his dwelling *peculiarly* in any *temples made with hands*; nor is there any evidence or *sign* of his doing so. The promise of his presence, under the gospel, is tied to *persons*, not to *places*: and the only temple GOD hath

ever had among the *Gentiles*, is his church and people: In *them*, and not in any houses made with hands, does he now dwell.—And this is very agreeable to *antient prophecy*: We are there told, that the house which GOD prefers before the temple, is *an humble* and a *contrite spirit* *; and that all the holiness which belonged to places of worship formerly, should be quite abolished at the coming of the Messiah.—This is no less agreeable to the *nature of things*, and our *notions of the supreme Being*. The *relative* holiness of *places*, and the *inherent* holiness of *persons*, stand nearly connected upon the foot of *reason*: Or, if I may so speak, that which *invites* the presence of GOD into any place of worship, is an *inward purity*, or *moral rectitude*, a *likeness* to GOD, and the *love* and *practice* of true religion; it being certain, that no man can *rightly worship* him, who is not, at least, in the general, a lover of righteousness, and lives in the practice of it †; for *GOD heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of*

* See *Lowth* on *Isa.* lxvi. 1, 2. *Comp.* chap. lvii. 15. and *Acts* vii. 49.

† “No man can rightly *worship GOD* (says an ingenious writer) who is not possessed of the *love of virtue*; because the virtuous qualities of that being are the ground of his adorableness; and a like temper in us, is absolutely necessary to render our worship sincere.”—And, “would these things, says he, admit of a separation, I should much rather be found in the practice of all virtues, than be a worshiper of GOD in a neglect of his laws.” See the *importance of right apprehensions of GOD with respect to religion and virtue*, by *J. Ball*, particularly the author’s reasonings under *Prop.* I.

of GOD, and doeth his will, him he beareth*. This is that moral character that *makes and denominates a peculiar people* under the gospel; and the sanctity of any house or place of worship depends upon it. Without this we cannot see GOD†, and shall have no enjoyment of him, here or hereafter. If we would be happy in his presence, we should purify ourselves as he is pure. Holiness in GOD is the lustre‡ of all his moral attributes, the perfection of righteousness and goodness; and in us it is a conformity to his nature and will, or an imitation and resemblance of him in these most amiable and excellent virtues. Is he a just, equal, generous, good Being? We are holy when we are *thus like him*, in our measure and degree; when we resemble him in the exercises of righteousness, charity, and beneficence, and in all virtuous and good actions. This is the holiness of persons, and the beauty of the moral world; this is the livery of our Lord's family; and by *this* the members of it are known and distinguished from the rest of the world.

AND, I further add, that the more of this beautiful image we bring with us into any place of worship, there is always more of GOD in that place, more of his friendly notice and presence; and the place receives a better consecration than any lifeless statues or images are able to give it.----The *Gentiles* believed their gods were pre-

* John ix. 31.

† Heb. xii. 14.

‡ Exod. xv. 11.

present where their *images* were worshipped, and many of them imagined that they assumed, informed, and *animated* these images*.—How false and groundless soever this opinion was (for we know that *an idol is nothing in the world* †; no deity, nothing of a GOD;) yet the supposition it went upon was somewhat plausible, and carried an appearance of *reason* in it; namely, that the Gods they worshipped *should*, if any where, be *especially* present in such places to hear and help their votaries: And it is certain, that this, (when applied to the true GOD, and the true christian way of worship) is no *weak* or *idle conceit*, but a *very great* and *important truth*.—What, though he does not dwell in any edifice or image made by *art of man's device*; [the great spirit of the universe is not thus limited or *cloister'd up*, as the Heathens imagined their fictitious deities were:] We are, nevertheless, sure of *this*, from scripture and reason both, *viz.* that, as he is present in *all places*, so he is *graciously* present with his own people. The *holy soul* is the *best*, the *only image* of GOD in this world; or, every pious good man is a *living temple*, an *habitation of GOD through the Spirit*: This is the *image* he loves, and the *only temple* in which he now dwells.

I 3

AND,

* To which fancy, it has been thought the Apostle may refer in that passage, 1 Cor. vi. 19. where he tells the *Christians*, that their *bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost*; that GOD is powerfully in them, though not in those dumb images. Vid. Dr. *Hammond's Tracts* on idolatry, § 34.

† 1 Cor. viii. 4.

AND, accordingly, we may observe, that when the Heathens accused the primitive Christians for having no *temples*, charging it upon them as a piece of atheism and impiety, the answer, or defence that the christian apologists made, was entirely built upon this very notion or principle now mentioned. They were ready to own and acknowledge that they *had* no such temples as the Heathens pleaded for, nor *ought* to have any; (such I mean as were adorned with *statues* and *images*, with fine *altars* and *ornaments*;) since the true GOD did not *need* them, nor could possibly be honoured by them. Nay, they abhorred the very *name*, and rejected the *thoughts* of any such thing.---- But then—they could appeal to GOD for their piety, probity, and sincerity; for the innocence and integrity of their lives; and a righteous, peaceable, well-ordered conversation: And thus they laid the greatest stress where it ought to be laid; upon an *inward* and *moral purity*, a *Christian temper*, and a *holy life*. The *images* that *we* dedicate to GOD, says one of the ancients, are not carved by the hands of artists, but formed and fashioned in us by the WORD of GOD; the virtues of justice, temperance, piety, &c. *These* are the only *statues* formed in our minds, and by which *alone* we are persuaded it is *fit* to do honour to him who is the *image of the invisible GOD* †.

AND

† *Orig.*—And we have another excellent and fine apology to the same purpose in *Minucius Felix*, p. 94-5. *Pu-*
tatis

AND this is so plain a truth, so important a lesson, that the light of nature seems to dictate the same thing. The *Heathens* have been instructed to place religion in an *imitation* of the object whom we worship. And, certain it is, that the greater *likeness* we bear to GOD, the more full and satisfying *enjoyment* we shall have of him: And, especially, may we hope for his *gracious presence*, whenever we pay our solemn homage to him. — It is this, properly speaking, that makes a *church* in any place, let the worship be performed in a more *publick* or *private* manner *, by a *less* or a *greater* number: For, what is a church, but a worshipping society of true Christians? It is *such* a church, that makes a *sanctuary*; even a society of *Saints* met together for religious exercises: Or, (as the *church of England* very well

ex-

tatis autem nos occultare quod colimus, si delubra & aras non habemus? Quod enim simulachrum Deo fingam, cum si recte existimes sit *Dei homo ipse simulachrum*? --- Nonne melius in nostra dedicandus est mente? In nostro imo consecrandus est pectore? Hostias, & victimas Domino offeram, quas in usum mei protulit, ut rejiciam ei suum munus? Ingratum est; cum sit litabilis hostia, *bonus animus*, & *pura mens*, & *sincera conscientia*. Igitur qui *innocentiam* colit, Domino supplicat: Qui *justitiam*, Deo libat: Qui *fraudibus abstinet*, propitiatur Deum: Qui hominem *periculo subripit*, opimam victimam cædit. *Hæc nostra sacrificia, hæc Dei sacra sunt*: Sic apud nos religiosior est ille, qui justior. At enim quem colimus Deum, nec ostendimus, nec videmus. Immo ex hoc Deum credimus, quod eum sentire possumus, videre non possumus.

* Epist. to Philem. ver. 2. Col. iv. 15. Vid. *Old Whigg*, No. 76.

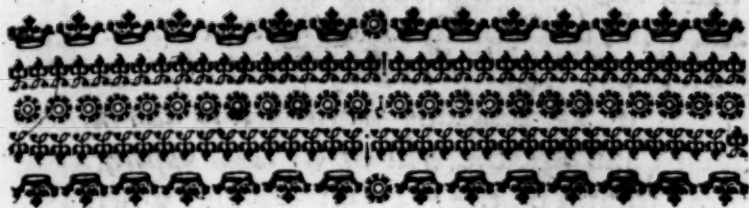
expresses it in one of her articles *) *The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful † men, in which the pure word of GOD is preached, and the sacraments are duly administered, according to Christ's order and appointment. The church is where GOD is, and where his people are; and it is the sanctity of persons, that makes any place a holy place: GOD loves his own image where-ever he sees it; and he loves to visit and converse with those who bear his image: He requires to be worshiped in spirit and in truth; and, where-ever we thus worship him, he will be graciously present with us.*

* Art. XIX.

† This was its first signification among Christians. Those who composed, or made up a church, were called [*αἱσολ*] *the faithful*, in opposition to the Pagan world, who had no faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, nor in the promises of the Gospel. See *Enquiry into the constitution, &c. of the Prim. Church*, Ch. I. § 2.



S E R M



S E R M O N VI



E X O D. XX. 24.

— *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*

W E shall begin this discourse with another observation under the head of our consecrating places of publick worship; and it is this. We may then be said to consecrate places of worship,

§. 4. WHEN we conform to the *rule* of worship, or serve GOD, as far as may be, according to the light and direction which his *Gospel* affords us. This is, certainly, *one way* to invite and engage a Divine presence with us. It is GOD himself that must appoint whatever relates to his own *worship*: This honour he hath reserved to himself, since *he* only knows what

what *becomes* his own greatness and holiness, and what tends most to the advancement of his own glory. As his *command* is the *ground* and *reason* of all religious worship ; so his *wisdom* alone, and not the will or wisdom of any creature, should be the *rule* and *measure* of it : This should direct every *part* of it, and all that *belongs* to it : Nor should we ever presume to do or *appoint* any thing in the worship of God *besides* or *beyond* his own institution. We should guide and regulate our *worship*, as well as our *practice*, by the rule of GOD's word ; and especially by the writings of the *New Testament*, or the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles. The best rule or standard for christian worship is to be drawn from hence ; or, by this, we are to judge of what is, at any time, *made* a rule or standard, by Christians of differing sentiments. It is, doubtless, incumbent upon all to study and practise the most *acceptable* way of worship, or what they *think* to be so : And, how can we judge or determine in this matter, by any *better* rule than the *bible* ? This is the religion of Christians, the *religion of Protestants* * ; and unless we find our religion *here*, or endeavour to do so, all the religion we may pretend to is worth little. If the Bible is *really* the word of GOD, a revelation from Heaven, the way of worship that is there prescribed must *certainly* be *right*, however some may *add* unto it, or others *mistake* and *pervert* it. Our business, then, is this ; to study the Scriptures *carefully* and

* *Chillingworth.*

and *impartially*, making these our *only* rule; and so far as our worship, in any place, is *conformable* to this rule, (or to our *apprehensions* of the will of GOD, after a serious and upright enquiry) there GOD's *name* is *recorded*, and there his *presence* may be expected.---Now, in this point, the Gospel, I think, is very clear and satisfactory, and must appear to be so to any one that *duly* and *impartially* considers it: And though it is not so *full* and *particular*, upon this head, as the law of *Moses* was; yet all must allow, that it is *sufficiently plain* and *perfect*, and the *only* rule to us *Christians*; and therefore much the *safest* method we can take in the worship of GOD, and in which Christians are *most likely to agree*.---As to the *parts* of christian worship, properly so called, these are *plain* and *easy*, being chiefly *natural*, as I may say, and in which Christians *are generally agreed*: As to the *modes* and *circumstances* of it, the case is different, and the sentiments of men are various; [what one man thinks very apt in the worship of GOD another thinks is not so.] There is plainly a *great diversity*, and too *little charity* in these points; more's the pity! And yet, even *here*, the gospel rule is plain and easy; nor can any thing be better calculated to promote an *unity* in *worship*, as well as *affection*, amongst Christians: For, I need only observe, that it *clearly* and *fully* determines what worship is *acceptable*, and what is *not*: And why should we seek or *insist* upon any thing further? --- I would not enter into particulars,

culars, or debate an argument that has been often considered by learned and pious men in different sentiments; and shall only take notice of a few things that are proper to my *design*, and the subject we are upon. In order, therefore, to *please* G O D, and to obtain his favour, we should endeavour to worship him,

(1.) WITH the greatest *purity* and *simplicity*. This is the *true* worship, as our Saviour himself tells us, and most agreeable to the *nature* of G O D, who is a *spirit*, and requires to be worshipped *in spirit and in truth* *. And, surely, if men did but understand and consider this, it would help very much to abate that intemperate zeal, which they are apt to have for external and indifferent things in religion. One great design of the gospel, is to bring men off from resting too much in *external observances*, and to make them more intent upon a *spiritual way of worship*, and the *essential vital acts of religion*. Our worship must be *pure*, in opposition to that which is *carnal* and *ceremonial*; and it must be *sincere* and *upright*, in opposition to a *formal* and *hypocritical* devotion: Or, the *purity* of gospel worship, may be understood to respect, either the *way* and *manner*, or the *principle* and *ends* of it.

I. O U R worship must be pure, as to the *manner* of it, in opposition to that which is *legal* and *ceremonial*. We have no other way of
learn-

* John iv. 23, 24.

learning where G O D hath *recorded his name* under the gospel, but by the worship itself: He now resides where this is celebrated according to his mind and will. If since he does not appoint the particular building or spot of ground, as formerly, we may be assured that, *wheresoever* we worship him *in spirit and in truth*, we shall be accepted: For it is the *worship* that renders the *place* acceptable, not the *place* that renders the *worship* so. And it is observable, that so long as the worship of G O D was confined to a particular determinate place, it consisted chiefly in certain *carnal rites* and *ordinances*: And the worship that was tendered there, (whether at the tabernacle or temple) was more *acceptable*, more *available*, than elsewhere, as being the *only* place where G O D would accept of those ceremonial services. But, the case being now altered, and all such particular places and rites long since abolished, he hath plainly signified, that a pure and spiritual worship is what he now insists upon, as most acceptable to himself in *any place*.

N O W that may be deemed a *pure* and *spiritual worship* that stands opposed to the *shadows of the law*, or (what we call) *legal ceremonies*. The service of G O D, under the law, stood very much in *sacrifices* of various kinds, in *meats and drinks*, and distinctions of *days*, in *divers washings*, and *carnal ordinances**: But these things, (being no way suited to the plain and manly spirit of Christianity,) are
now

* Heb: ix. 10,

now laid aside. They did not tend to purify the mind as moral actions do; nor are they so acceptable to a holy GOD: And therefore we find, that tho' he prescribed to his antient people both a *moral* and *ritual* service, yet he always preferred the *former*, when they came in competition †. He commanded the *latter*, not so much by way of *approbation*, as by way of *condescension* to their weakness. It was not so agreeable to the *nature* ‡ of GOD, as to the *temper and spirit* of that people: It was permitted to them for the *hardness* || and carnality of their hearts, and their proneness to idolatry, and to teach them an *implicit obedience* to his will, as their *political* king and governor: And therefore, as soon as the wise ends of Providence in that dispensation were answered, it gave way to a much *better*; to a more pure, rational, and exalted way of worship, much more agreeable to the *nature* of GOD, and to the *sober, religious sentiments* of mankind: Or, it was only *imposed on them*, (as the Apostle speaks,) *until the time of reformation*; i. e. till the *Messiah* should come, who was to *reform* the old religion, and establish another way of worship. Accordingly he hath quite *abrogated* the whole *Jewish* worship, so far as it was *ceremonial* and *typical*; and hath left us a pure gospel worship, that is entirely free from all such observances, and in which both *Jews* and *Gentiles* may

† Isa. li. 16, 17. Hof. vi. 6. 1 Sam. xv. 22.
l. 13.

|| Mark x. 15. xvi. 14.

‡ Psal.

may all unite upon one *broad and easy foundation.*

AND with as good reason, I may surely add, that a *pure gospel* worship, as *such*, is still free from all additional rites and ceremonies of mere *human* appointment. It is a *ruled case*, a *received article*, that as we ought not to do any thing *against*, so not *besides**, or beyond the written word, much less to *require* or *insist* upon it. This would be to *narrow* that foundation of unity which Christ himself hath laid, and make it too *uneasy* and *difficult* for all Christians to *unite* in. Christ alone is the *supreme head* of the church, the sole lawgiver in his kingdom: And tho' the church may make laws of *execution* or *disposition*, (as some writers are pleased to distinguish,) yet *be* only can make laws of *institution*; such, I mean, as should *bind the conscience*, and *determine our practice* in religious worship. It does not appear that he hath given to the church any *patent* or *commission* to institute or impose *mystical ceremonies* as terms of *communion*, any more than to prescribe *articles of faith* as terms of *salvation*: This is *his prerogative*; and not to be invaded by any, how learned, wise, or powerful soever. He hath long since released us from the yoke of *Jewish* ceremonies; nor could I ever learn, that he hath appointed any *in the room* of them, or lodged a power in the hands

* See the VIth and XXth *Articles* of the Church of England.

hands of men to prescribe or *impose* any at their own *pleasure*, or upon any *pretence* whatever, And may I not add, that as there is no such real goodness or importance in these things, for which they ought to be *commanded*; (for *most* * agree that they are *indifferent*, and what is indifferent can never be thought *important*;) so no persons can be bound in conscience to *submit* to them; and especially, if they are *sinful*, or *doubtful* †; or to continue the *use* of them, if they are found to be a *stumbling-block* and *offence* to others? For, in this case, the law of *charity* will put a *restraint* upon indifferent things. And, surely, if (in case of *scandal*,) they are not to be admitted in *common use* ‡, much less in the *Christian worship* and *sacraments*, where all should be done to *edification*, and with the greatest *candour* and *charity*. Let us set this point of *ceremonies* in the most *favourable* light, and suppose them to be never so *indifferent* or *lawful* in themselves; yet still the Apostle's argument will be very just and pertinent here: *If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why then are ye subject to ordinances, after the commandments and doctrines of men* ||? “ I wonder, (says a considerable writer of the last age,)
“ how

* This is not only the *assertion*, but the *faith* of the Church of England, that her *ceremonies* are *indifferent*; and, as such, may be either *left so*, or *abolished* by those in authority. See the *Preface* to the *Common Prayer*, and *Art. XXXIV.*

† Rom. xiv. 23. ‡ Ver. 20, 21. || Col. ii. 20, 22.

“ how it can enter into rational minds, that
 “ GOD should break off the yoke of his own
 “ ceremonies, as unsuitable to the evangelical
 “ liberty, and yet that a yoke of human cere-
 “ monies should be put on, as congruous to
 “ it* : The yoke, in this case, is not removed,
 “ but

* The ceremonies thus taken seem to *pervert* [or invert] *the gospel*, as the apostle tells the *Galatians*, chap. i. 6, 7. They did not *deny* the gospel, but they added *Jewish* ceremonies to it, and so inverted it, and made it to be *another gospel*; a gospel mixed with *Jewish* ceremonies, being not the same with itself in its purity. And as those *Jewish* ceremonies did invert the gospel, so do *ours*, tho’ upon a different reason, invert it also. Theirs did invert it, as being made *necessary to salvation*; ours do it, as being made *terms of communion*. Nor is it material, whether that which is added be a *great* thing, or a *little*: A *little* thing, if added as a condition, inverts it; because it turns an *absolute free* disposition into a *conditional* one. They subvert the gospel, (saith *Chrysostom* upon this text,) who bring in *μικρον τι*, *paululum quiddam*, any little new thing into it; that is, if they bring it in as necessary to salvation, or as a condition to any ordinance of the gospel. And hence *circumcision* ceasing to be divine any longer, became *concision*, (as the apostle terms it,) a renting the church; and the doctors that mixed it with the gospel, were as *dogs*, tearing asunder the unity of it. *Phil.* iii. 2. See *Polhill’s Discourse of Schism*, p. 78, &c. — And I may say, Hath not this been too, too visible, in another case? Were there some amongst the *Galatians* that would have *perverted the gospel*, and made a rent or *schism* in the church? And did the *Pharisees* (thro’ a fondness for their traditions and ceremonies,) separate and divide themselves from others, calling the common people, *populum terræ*, saying, [*Ne attingas me,*] Touch me not, for I am *holier* than thou? And is it not too much so at this Day? — And where, then, shall we charge the *guilt of schism* in this case? For my part, I am constrained to think, at present, (with many others,) that the names of

“ but *changed*; — by what authority, and to
 “ what advantage, let others answer. When a
 “ church useth its power according to the line
 “ and level of scripture, *all is well*; but when
 “ it overflows, and exceeds its commission, then
 “ christian liberty goes to wreck.” Can any
 one (in earnest) think, that GOD, who is a
 spirit, is pleased with pomp and show, or with
 any such gaudy rites and forms as affect the
senses of men; or that he is not much better
 pleased with a pure gospel worship, in its *na-*
tive beauty and *primitive simplicity*? Some
 have thought, that the command given to the
Israelites, (in the former part of the verse
 wherein is my text, as well as the verses fol-
 lowing,) carries some such document or in-
 struction as this in it: *An altar of earth shalt*
thou make unto me, &c. i. e. ye shall do it with
 all

Mr. Hales of *Eaton College*, [in his tract of *schism*,] and
 of a late most renowned bishop, [*Dr. Stillingfleet*, in his
Irenicum, ch. vi. p. 120.] who both asserted this principle,
 [viz. that if things be imposed under the notion of *indif-*
ferent, (which many at the same time think *sinful* or *un-*
lawful,) and a *schism* follow thereupon, *the imposers* are the
schismaticks;] will be great in *England*, as long as their
 writings shall live, and good sense can be understood in
 them. — And give me leave to observe, that the argu-
 ment, I am now upon, has been thought, (by some of
 great learning and judgment,) to carry an unanswerable
 weight in it: *Dr. Stillingfleet* [in his *Preface* to his *Iren.*
 pag. 7, 8, 9, 10.] hath several arguments to this purpose;
 which tho’ perhaps he may, (says *Dr. Whitby*,) I am sure
 I cannot answer them. See *Protestant Reconciler*, pag.
 181, 236.

all becoming *plainness* and *simplicity* *.— And every thing, indeed, that goes *beyond* this, (or whatever rites and customs have been introduced by some *Christians* from the *Pagan* or *Jewish* worship, or are still retained by any *Protestants* who profess to have left the *church of Rome* ; these, I say,) may be reckoned amongst things [*vacuæ observationis*,] of *vain observation*, (as one of the fathers speaks,) *i. e.* *superstitious*, and rather curious and *affected*, than a *reasonable devotion*.— And I might easily shew, that this hath been the sense of the *greatest* and *best* of men in every age, and of some that have filled and adorned the highest stations in the church.— “ All outward circumstances, (says *Archbishop Tillotson*,) excepting those of the two sacraments, which are *positive*, are now left by the gospel to as great a liberty as *natural* † *necessity* and *decency* “ will

* *Deus altare terreum confici jussit ; ut cultus antiqui simplicitatem sibi maxime gratam indicaret — e materia tam pura & quasi virginea fieri voluit ; ut illud sanctius haberent Israelitæ — Gentes antiquæ, natura vel traditione doctæ, naturalia omnia, rudia licet & impolita, sanctiora & diis suis gratiora, crediderunt. Spenser. de Leg. Heb. lib. ii. cap. 5.*

† In order to a *clearer* understanding of this matter, we should carefully distinguish between *religious* ceremonies or *symbolical* rites, and what are meer *natural* circumstances in divine worship. By the *former* I understand, such as carry in them a religious meaning, and have the plain signification of something spiritual, inward, and invisible, couched under them : or such actions, modes, or representations, as *design* any *special honour* to *GOD* or *Christ*.

“ will permit. We must not be rude, or do
 “ any

These must be instituted or settled by a *divine* authority, since G O D alone can determine, (as he always *hath* done,) what is most honourable to himself, and most conducive to the great ends of religion. — But as to the *latter*, [meer *natural* circumstances,] the case is widely different; such, I mean, as time and place; these are meer *natural circumstances* of action, (abstracted from their religious design,) and must *necessarily* attend every performance, or act of worship, whatever: *i. e.* When we serve G O D, we must *necessarily* and *always* do it with these attending circumstances; nor can it be done without them: They are necessary to *all human* actions, natural, civil, or religious. Since, therefore, they are necessary, [*naturally* so,] and yet are no where precisely determined in the *New Testament*, having no holy signification in *themselves*; they are plainly left to the conveniency of societies, and the prudent determination of the worshipers themselves. And in this case we have only one general obliging rule; *viz.* *Let all things be done decently, and in order*; (1 Cor. xiv. 40.) *i. e.* all those, and *only* those things, that become necessary by a *Divine appointment*, or are *naturally* so, as the things that I have now mentioned. — And *these*, (which I call meer natural circumstances in divine worship,) do as much differ from all *symbolical human* rites, or *religious* ceremonies, as the *natural* worship of G O D, (consisting in *prayer*, and *praise*, and *hearing* the word of G O D,) does from the *Jewish ceremonial* worship, as *such*, which consisted in sacrifice, incense, and a great many other temporary rites, which have been long since abolished. — So that the *natural* worship of G O D, (under the light and assistances of the gospel, together with a few additional rites,) is the only *rule* or *standard* to us Christians, without any superadded inventions of men; and the several parts of it may be now as acceptably performed in *any* place, as the *Jewish* sacrifices formerly were in the *temple* at *Jerusalem*. — In these things, therefore, which are not of peculiar Divine appointment, we justly plead our Christian liberty; and reckon ourselves concerned, as much as in us lies, to preserve the *simplicity* that is in *Christ*.

“ any thing that is naturally *indecent* † in the
 “ worship of GOD ; but farther than this, I
 “ doubt

† This is the proper limitation and meaning of those words [1 Cor. xiv. 40.] upon which some have laid so great a stress, and raised such a mighty superstructure ; as is plain from all the instances preceding, which gave occasion to this rule. There were great *indecencies* and *disorders* committed in the church of *Corinth*, such as might give occasion to unbelievers to pronounce them *mad*. (*Ver. 23. Compare chap. xi.*) It was therefore a very reasonable and pertinent caution that the apostle here lays down ; *viz. Let all your things be done decently, and in order.* And the *most* that can be fairly collected from hence is this, [that when any thing is performed *indecently* and *disorderly* in divine worship, the rulers of the church should correct it.] — These words are not disobeyed, unless there be some disorder or indecency committed ; for as *decency* and *indecency* are *privatively opposite*, it will follow, that there must be decency *sufficient* in those actions where there is no indecency. “ If
 “ then it can appear, (says the *Protest. Reconciler*, p. 314.)
 “ that praying without a surplice, or receiving the sacra-
 “ ment without kneeling, or baptizing without the cross,
 “ is doing these things *indecently* and *disorderly* ; then must
 “ it be confessed that this is a good warrant for the im-
 “ position of these things ; but till this can be made appear,
 “ it must be vainly pleaded to that end.” — The worship of the *apostles* (that was without these ceremonies,) was either *decent* or *indecent* : If *decent*, then decency doth not consist in ceremonies ; if *indecent*, they did not observe their own rule of decency, nor act as they taught. Order and decency require not, that some holy things should be *newly* ordained ; but that *those* which are ordained by GOD, should be used congruous to their dignity. The institution of somewhat new, is one thing ; and the right and seemly disposition of that which is instituted, is another. This rule (says *Bishop Taylor* in his *Ductor Dubit.*) is not to be extended to such decencies as are only *ornaments*, but is to be limited to such as only *rescue from confusion*. The reason he assigns, is, because *spiritual guides* cannot do their duty, unless things be so *orderly*, that there be no *confusion* ; but

“doubt not but the gospel hath left us free.
 “— Where-ever the *external* part of religion
 “is principally regarded, and men are more
 “careful to worship G O D with outward pomp
 “and ceremony than *in spirit and in truth*,
 “religion degenerates into superstition, and
 “men embrace the *shadow* of religion, and let
 “go the *substance*. — And [again,] whatever
 “Christians or churches are intent upon exter-
 “nal rites and observances, to the neglect of
 “the weightier matters of religion, regarding
 “*meats, and drinks, &c.* to the prejudice of
 “*righteousness* and *peace*, wherein the *kingdom*
 “*of G O D* consists, they advance a religion as
 “contrary to the *nature of G O D*, and as
 “unsuitable to the *genius and temper of the*
 “*gospel*, as can be imagined. — I deny not,
 “(says he,) but that very honest and devout
 “men may be this way addicted; but the
 “wiser any man is, the better he understands
 “the nature of G O D and of religion, the fur-
 “ther will he be from this temper. A religion
 “that

if it can go *beyond* this limit, then it can have no natural
 limit, but may extend to sumptuousness, ornaments, and
 rich utensils, and what not: For, it is plain, this principle
 would justify any rites which those that are uppermost may
 have a mind to bring into the worship of G O D: And how
 far pride and fancy, or meer humour and prejudice, (under
 the usual and plausible pretence of decency or significancy,)
 may carry some persons, is hard to say. See also *Dr. Calam-
 my's Defence of moderate Nonconformity*, vol. ii. p. 10, &c.
Introduct. where this *capital* argument or plea is fully and
 fairly considered; and such principles laid down, as, in the
 opinion of many, (and of the great *Mr. Locke* in particu-
 lar,) will always remain firm and unshaken.

“ that consists in external and little things, does
 “ most easily gain upon and possess the weakest
 “ minds ||.”

NOW if there be any thing of *reason* or *force* in this argument, we cannot, surely, be too *cautious* in this matter; and should endeavour (both as *Christians* and as *Protestants*,) to maintain the simplicity and purity of gospel worship. — And our worship should not only be *pure* as to the *manner* of it; but likewise,

2. As to the *principle* and *ends* of it, in opposition to a *formal* and *hypocritical* devotion. And *here* I would lay the *greatest stress*. We should chiefly look to our *intentions* and *views* in all our dealings with GOD, and in the general conduct of life. A defect here is the *greatest error*; and (I am verily persuaded) of more *dangerous consequence*, than a mistake the other way can be. The *heart* is the seat of true piety; or, the *best*, the *only* principle of *true religion*, lies *here*: I mean, that where a person is *sincere* in the exercises of Christian worship, (however he may differ from others in his *way* of worship, or unhappily *mistake* the manner of it,) GOD will *accept* him; tho’ some of his *neighbours*, perhaps, for want of a Godlike temper and Christian charity, may severely *censure* and *condemn* him. Christians may *differ*, as to the *mode* and *circumstances* of worship; but they are all *agreed*, as to the *principle* and *ends* of

K 4

it:

|| See his 2d vol. fol. Serm. c.

it : *i. e.* we all believe that, *that* worship only is acceptable to GOD which proceeds from the heart. — We should, indeed, *seek* and *endeavour* to serve Him in the purest manner, and in a way that we think most agreeable to his nature and will ; (this is every one's duty ;) but especially should we worship him with a *pure heart* and *intention* ; for this is what he chiefly looks at ; nor will the worship of GOD be accepted, under any form, or in any place, when separate from it : This makes our prayers accepted *every where* *, and not on *consecrated ground only* : From whencesoever they ascend, if our hearts accompany them, they shall come up before GOD, even into his *holy hill*, whether our souls take their flight from the publick assembly, the family, or the closet.

THE GOD whom we worship is a *pure* and *spiritual* being ; and as we must not think to put him off with any *carnal rites* or *ceremonies of our own devising* ; so neither with a *bodily* reverence and attendance only. The worship of the *Jews* was chiefly a *bodily* service ; but we must now serve him with the *spirit of our minds*. The worship of the *gospel* should be chiefly *spiritual* ; it being the will of GOD that our worship should be as agreeable to the *object* of it, as the nature of the creature, who is to give it, will admit : And therefore, tho' an outward *bodily* reverence is due, yet as he is a *pure spirit*, we should see that

* 1 Tim. ii. 8.

that our worship of him be chiefly *spiritual*, in the *inward* frame and temper of our *hearts*. We should always serve the *best* and most *perfect* being with the *best* we have ; *i. e.* with the *mind* and *spirit* : The *understanding* and *affections* should be engaged ; and whatsoever we do in the worship of *GOD*, we should do it *heartily as unto the Lord*. If we only worshiped *GOD* to be *seen of men*, to gain applause, or to serve any carnal and worldly purposes ; then, indeed, a bare *ritual, bodily, outside* devotion might be suitable enough : But we should remember, that *GOD* is a *spirit*, that he *looketh on the heart* *, and *desireth truth in the inward parts* † ; and that the most pure and acceptable *worship*, or substantial *piety*, consists in the devotion of our *spirits*, and in such an *inward prevailing love* to *GOD*, as expresth itself in a *real conformity* of our *lives* and *actions* to his will. That only is a *reasonable service*, which we perform with a pure, sincere, and incorrupt mind ; free from any false, carnal, and hypocritical views. This is the *worship*, this the *service*, that we should present to an holy *GOD*, as ever we expect or desire his *gracious acceptance*, or *presence with us* in our religious assemblies.

AND this is our Saviour's own argument ‡ :
 [*GOD is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.*] *q. d.*
 " Do not wonder at this ; for *GOD* is a mind
 " free from all mixture of matter, and infinite
 " in

* 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

† Psal. li. 6.

‡ John iv. 24.

“ in all the perfections of a spiritual nature ;
 “ in understanding, freedom, and goodness :
 “ and they who call upon him with minds pu-
 “ rified from lust and malice, and from all in-
 “ ordinate affections : They, I say, worship
 “ GOD, so as to do him the most substantial
 “ and real honour ; because this worship is a-
 “ greeable to the nature of GOD, it being the
 “ devotion of the reasonable or spiritual part
 “ of their own natures, in which alone they
 “ are like to GOD *.” — *In vain* do any
 people worship him, not only when they *teach*
for doctrines the commandments of men ; but when
 they *draw near to him with their mouths, and ho-*
nour him with their lips only †. We should see
 that our *hearts* are right with GOD ; or that
 the principles and views upon which we act,
 are such as will stand the test of his omnisci-
 ent eyes ; otherwise, all our holiness and devo-
 tion is a vain and empty show. The heart is
 the *altar that sanctifies the gift* ‡, or consecrates
 every act of divine worship ; nor will any of
 our services be accepted, but what proceed from
 hence : Nay, *Christ* himself, (if I may so speak)
 would very much sink and depretiate his own
 righteousness, should he attempt to recommend
 any other : If a holy GOD rejects our services
 because of their insincerity, the righteousness of
 the Mediator *will not, cannot* recommend them.
 — And, as we should serve him with the
 greatest *purity* and *simplicity* : So also,

(2.)

* Dr. Clagett's par. in loco. † Mat. xv. 8, 9. ‡ Mat.
 xxiii. 17, 19.

(2.) WITH the greatest reverence and solemnity; or, with a serious, humble spirit, and deportment.—A religious gravity, and due decorum becomes the worshipers of the GOD of heaven. We should bring into every place, into every act and exercise of divine worship, an awful sense of GOD upon our minds. This would do much to influence our attention and behaviour, and excite a natural and true devotion. The consideration of his purity, his presence, and his authority, would, more especially, dispose us to a serious temper and becoming carriage in all the parts of religious worship: Nor, would any thing, I am persuaded, be a better guide to us in the whole form and management of it. A due reverence for the Divine authority would lead us into a natural decency in Divine worship, and teach us to observe the regular mean betwixt a pompous superstition on the one hand, and the popular confusion on the other: It would make us cautious how we act, and what we introduce into the worship of GOD without a Divine warrant.—And, in like manner, would a sense of GOD's presence with us, and his transcendent holiness, put us into a posture of reverence and devotion. As we should set the LORD always before us, so, more especially, when we attend upon him in his sanctuary: This would be the best preservative against distractions, and the best incitement to a holy and reverend behaviour. GOD is greatly to be feared in the assembly of
the

the saints; and will be *sanctified*, or *had in reverence*, by all them that are about him *. No profane unhallowed *foot* should tread in his sanctuary; nor should any thing be admitted that is *unworthy of God*, or that seems to *reflect* upon the *holiness* of his Majesty. This is the Apostle's argument; If God himself is holy, we should be holy too †, and worship him in a holy manner, i.e. with reverence and godly fear ‡: This is most suitable to his glorious Majesty, and infinite greatness.---And, yet, how little of this *actual holiness*, (as I may call it) is to be seen in christian assemblies at this day? Or, how *few* are there, (and, even otherwise, *holy* and *good* persons too) that serve God with such *bodily reverence* and respect as they ought to do? For my part, I must freely declare, (and herein I am not singular) "That should the
 " enemies of our way of worship be present to
 " observe us, there is scarce any thing I should
 " be so much ashamed of, as our careless, irre-
 " verend, indevout manner of joining in pub-
 " lick worship, especially in PUBLICK PRAYER." How many are there who seem to bear no *part* at all in it; and who seldom put themselves into a *posture* of worship? A drowsy look, or a careless air, too plainly shews, that their devotion is sometimes *suspended*, and that their thoughts and affections are too often, with the *fool's eye*, in the ends of the earth.---There is more, perhaps, in a bodily reverence and devotion,

* Psal. lxxxix. 7.—Lev. x. 3. † 1 Pet. i. 16. ‡ Heb. xii. 28.

votion, than some are aware of : Sure I am, that we ought to be more careful in this matter than the generality are. And, I can't but think, *that posture*, or *change of posture*, always most *eligible*, which is most *seemly* and *genuine*, which is the best indication of a serious spirit, and the greatest help to devotion. As our worship should be free from all *enthusiastical heats* and *raptures*, or *extravagant agitations*, on the one hand ; so also, from a *careless*, *indolent*, and *slothful* behaviour, on the other. It is a *dictate of nature*, that when men have to do with the GODS, they should be, [*verecundiores & compositi*,] *modest* and *composed* in their behaviour. This is the true *religious mean*, that we should observe in the worship of GOD. There should be nothing *careless* or *irreverend*, *scenecal* or *superstitious*, in our performance of it. *Religion itself* is a wise, calm, rational, and consistent thing ; and all our *practices* in religion should be so too. Our frame, gesture, and whole demeanour, should be grave and decent, calm and sedate ; such as bespeaks an inward reverence, and the employment of a sober, serious, and devout mind.

AMONGST the rules and precepts which GOD gave the Jews, this was one ; *Ye shall reverence my sanctuary* *. As there was a peculiar holiness in that place, (of which I have spoken before) so there was, no doubt, a peculiar reverence due to it ; and accordingly there were

* Levit. xix. 30.

were sundry laws and customs relating to that reverence. No body might approach it, either for prayer or sacrifice, without much solemnity, and an awful sense of the Majesty that dwelt there. It was the only place where acceptable sacrifices could be offered, and that only at certain *times*, and after great *preparation*, which gave them the greater esteem and reverence for it.

AND, as the GOD, whom we worship, is the same holy and excellent Being that he ever was, we should still make him our *fear* and our *dread* *. The *church*, the *house of GOD*, is the place of his *special presence* at this day; a place of *observation*, as I may call it; and where he takes a *particular cognizance*, of all that approach him, or pretend to worship him: And, though no such reverence, now, is due to the *place itself*; yet, to the *authority* and *presence* of GOD in it. We should consider, before-hand, whither we are going, and the work we are to engage in, and should diligently and devoutly attend the several parts of it. We should pray *in prayer*, and receive the word preached, *not as the word of man, but as the word of GOD* †. It should appear, as far as may be, by the decency and reverence of our *external* behaviour, that we act as under the *eye of GOD*, and that his *presence* and *purity* have a commanding influence over our *inward thoughts* and *affections*. If we *sanctify the Lord*
G O D

* Isa. viii. 13.

† 1 Thef. ii. 13.

GOD in our hearts *, we shall shew it by an outward reverence, and watch against all indecencies in the presence of GOD and his holy Angels.

(3.) To make our worship properly *evangelical*, we should do all *in the name of Christ*, and in a dependance on the *promised aids of the Gospel*.

It is *through Christ* that all our *sincere*, tho' *weak* and *imperfect* services, are accepted; and it is by *faith in him*, that we Christians should perform every act of worship. We should remember that *Jesus*, the Son of GOD, is our great *High Priest*; whose *atoning sacrifice*, and *living intercession*, we should have a great and constant regard to, in all the offerings we make, and the services we perform: Nay, this is represented as that *new and living way* which he himself hath *consecrated* for us, and in which we have *boldness to enter into the holiest*; or a *full assurance* †, not only that our present services shall be accepted, but that our *persons* shall be admitted, e'er long, into the presence of his glory, that state of consummate purity! — Only, we should remember to exercise *faith* upon him: This is *the law of Christianity*, a proper *evangelical duty*, and the *leading principle* with every true Christian: The *returning sinner* and the *worshiping saint*, are both accepted in this *beloved*: Through him *only* we have access to

* 1 Pet. iii. 15.

† Heb. x. 19, 20, -1, -2.

to the Father †, and are taught to offer up all our *prayers* ‡. — Sin had cut off all friendly intercourse betwixt GOD and man; rendered us unworthy of the Divine regards, and greatly unfitted us to perform any acceptable service to a Holy GOD: Now, the *mediation of Christ* is a suitable relief in this case, a most wise and gracious appointment for the encouragement of the sinner's hope. — The great Governor of the world, however merciful and good, did not think fit to *forgive*, even *penitent sinners*, or to accept of their *best* services, but in this appointed method: Nor, does it appear that he *could* do it, in any other way, so consistently with the honour of his government; or, that there is any other expedient, wherein the holiness of his Majesty could so fairly accord with the tenderness of his mercy. — So that this is the only *rational foundation* we can go upon; the *wisest* and the *safest remedy* that we can trust to: For such is the frailty and infirmity of human nature, that we are rendered unfit to converse with GOD *immediately*. But, behold! he may, without any debasement, freely converse with *us*; and we, though guilty creatures, may, without terror or anxiety, as freely draw near to *him*, through the sacrifice and intercession of his only Son. — *Blessed be GOD for Jesus Christ*, the great *Medium* of all our worship. — Let us learn to approach the Majesty of Heaven in *his name*. This is our DUTY, as *Christians*, and incumbent upon all that profess the Gospel: If we neglect this method

† John xiv. 6. — ‡ xvi. 23, 4.

method of acceptance, we act *without* a Divine warrant, and even *contrary* to a Divine command. And, as there are so many defects in our best performances, we should look upon it as our greatest PRIVILEGE too: We can never hope for mercy in any other way; nor should we presume to ask it in any other *name*. Our best services, if *sincere* and *upright*, are far from being *perfect*; and therefore we have this apostolical injunction; *Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus* *.

AND, as we should always maintain a due regard to the mediation of Christ, so likewise to the *standing* and *ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit*. Such is the present weakness and indisposition of our minds, that *how to perform that which is good we find not* †. In our attendance upon GOD, and in all our addresses to him, we stand in need of the Divine aids; which, in concurrence with the appointed means, and our own sincere *endeavours*, we are encouraged to expect: GOD has promised his *Holy Spirit to them that ask him* ‡; or, he will give all proper and needful assistance to those that *seek* it, that *value* and *improve* it, and will render their endeavours effectual. This assisting grace is particularly promised in the *New Testament*; and it seems to be ascribed to the *Spirit of GOD* as the more *immediate* author of it. Certain it is, that *GOD worketh in us* §, (as

* Colos. iii. 17. † Rom. vii. 18. ‡ Luke xi. 9, 13. § Philip. ii. 12, 13.

the Apostle speaks) though his working is oftentimes imperceptible, and the way and manner of it not easily explained. It is no less certain, that his agency now is as needful as ever for the *common* and *ordinary* purposes of the christian life. And why may not the same Spirit, which was afforded to the first Christians for *these* as well as other purposes, abide in the church still? The *fruits* of the Spirit (as the Apostles enumerates them *) are the same now as ever, and common to all true Christians; and we have as much *reason*, as much *incouragement*, to seek *his* influences in order to produce the same effects in us at this day, unless we can prove that GOD now operates upon the minds of men in a different manner from what he did formerly. His extraordinary gifts and assistances, indeed, are now ceased, and the great end of them answer'd; but, surely, his office and work in the general is not ceased, nor was it wholly confined to the first ages. GOD is *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*: He has the same benignity of temper, the same readiness and good-will, as in all former ages, to give his Holy Spirit for all needful purposes †; to *illuminate* and *sanctify* our minds, to *enliven* our devotions ‡, and to *assist* us in the exercises of piety and virtue: This is our encouragement under present weaknesses; and, in the various exercises of christian worship, we should have a constant eye to it. The Spirit is promised under

* Gal. v. 22. — Ephes. v. 9. † See *Whitby's* Appendix on 2 Cor. vi. ‡ Ephes. v. 18, 19, 20.

der the Gospel, as a Spirit of prayer and *supplication*; and it is by him that Christ dwells in the believing soul, and fulfils the promise of being with his people *always to the end of the world*.—We should therefore pray for the presence and help of this Holy Spirit in all our publick worship: We should cherish his motions, follow his conduct, and do nothing, (either in our *way of worship*, or in *common life*) to exclude or *forfeit* his gracious influence and assistance.

AND, thus, our worship should be *Christian* in order to make it *acceptable*. As we should do all in the name of Christ; so also, in a dependence on the Divine assistance, or through those desired aids of the Holy Spirit which are promised in the Gospel. Where-ever Divine worship is thus *performed*, there the name of GOD is *recorded*: Or, at least, it will be hard to prove, that his name is stamp'd on *that* worship where the mediation of Christ, and the influences of the Spirit, (the chief glories of the Gospel) are wholly neglected. Persons must greatly fail in their reverence and esteem for the Gospel revelation, and have little sense of their own *unworthiness*, and their own *weakness*, unless they have a regard to both. *We have an access to the Father by one Spirit, through the one Mediator, Christ Jesus* *.

* Ephes. ii. 18.

(4.) WE should join in the worship of GOD with a *peaceable* and *Catholick Spirit*; having *servent charity amongst* ourselves *, and a hearty love and good-will to all our fellow-christians every where.

IT is requisite, in the *first place*, that we maintain a peaceable and friendly communion amongst ourselves; that we guard against anger, and malice, and all uncharitableness: Or, as the Apostle advises, we should *lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting* †; i. e. without that *disputation* or *contention* which causeth uncharitableness, and unfits the mind for acts of devotion: A *peaceable heart* is as necessary in prayer as a *pure hand*; or, a charitable and benevolent spirit is of more consequence towards praying acceptably, than any distinction of times or places: *When*, or *where-ever* we pray, if we *regard iniquity* ‡, or retain malice *in the heart*, GOD will not bear us. The *Jewish doctors* have observed, that the *Shechinah*, or divine presence, dwelt with the meek and quiet spirit, but flieth from a man of wrath and anger. And we have a much greater *authority*, (even St. Paul himself, who gives us this *encouragement*, this *assurance*) that, if we *live in peace*, the GOD of love and peace shall be with us §.

AND

* 1 Pet. i. xx. ---iv. 8. † Διαλογισμῶ, 1 Tim. ii. 8.
‡ Psal. lxyi. 18. § 2 Cor. xiii. 2.

AND, as it behoves the members of the *same church* or society, to preserve peace and unity amongst themselves, by avoiding all quarrels and dissensions; so also to cherish and express a *catholic love* and *affection* to all their fellow-Christians in every other communion. This is as necessary and requisite as the former: and is one mark of true and primitive Christianity. There is a *likeness* and *love*, and *spiritual communion*, betwixt all the disciples of our common Lord, all the true worshipers of GOD in every place. They are all *one in Christ Jesus, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named* *.

— Though there is no one *place* that is the center of unity to all Christians, as the temple of old was to the various and distant *congregations of Israel*; yet there is one *faith*, in which they are all agreed; and, where this faith has its proper influence, there is one *spirit* too, by which they are all united in love to GOD, and one another: And, in this love, together with the genuine exercise and fruits of it, consists the *communion of saints*, or of all the *faithful* throughout the world, who, (though they are *many*) are *one body in Christ*, and every one *members one of another* †. — *There is one body*, and one spirit, saith the apostle ‡: And though the members of this one body may be distant in time and place, and differ in some points of external worship and communion; yet they are agreed in the essential doctrines and duties

* Ephes. iii. 15:

† Rom. xii. 5.

‡ Ephes. iv. 4.

150. *The Gospel Sanctuary.*

of Christianity ; they are all *sanctified in Christ Jesus* *, and bear his image ; they all walk by the same rule of righteousness, are animated and led by the same Spirit, and live in the same *faith, hope, and charity* ; and thus they are united under one head.

Now, this is the character of all true Christians: And this *union*, this *agreement*, we should *own* and *express* as we have opportunity, and endeavour to *preserve* and *strengthen*, as much as in us lies, if we would approve our selves disciples of the same master, and *members one of another*.

WE should *love* all them, for instance, that *love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*, and look upon them as *brethren*. Where should mutual love and affection take place, or prevail, if not amongst those that bear the same *image*, and the same *love*, to their blessed Lord ? The *first Christians* were known and distinguished by this name, [*Ἀδελφοί,*] the *brethren*, because of their brotherly love and affection, which was so great that their very enemies, the *Heathens*, took notice of them with this remark, “ See *how these Christians love one another.*” Oh, when shall this amiable, God-like spirit break forth, and appear with antient lustre, with brighter evidence, in the christian world ! Shall the little differences in opinion or practice, amongst Christians, always continue to alienate their

* 1 Cor. i. 2.

their affections, to obstruct or eclipse their charity, one towards another? GOD forbid. The rule of charity obligeth us, at *least*, to love those who differ from us in things not appertaining to the *foundation* of our faith: And, sure I am, that, in the present state of diversity and imperfection, this is the only *bond of perfectness* *, (or the most perfect bond of union) amongst Christians.

AND, we should not only *love* all who (we have reason to apprehend in the judgment of charity) are the living members of Christ's mystical body, but *by love SERVE one another* †, as we have opportunity and ability. Love is the great and leading principle in that communion or fellowship which the saints have one with another; and we should be ready, upon all occasions, to give some *evidence* and *proof* of it, by all the good offices that lie in our power, by a cordial sympathy and friendly assistance, by faithful admonition, and tender advice; and a seasonable communicating to them in all their necessities and afflictions. Thus it will appear that our religion comes from GOD, the *GOD of love and peace*, nor will any thing recommend it with more advantage to the approbation and esteem of others.

BUT our christian love and unity should more especially appear in our *acts of devotion* and *publick worship*. We shall thus discover a true and

* Col. iii. 14. † Gal. v. 13.

extensive charity; and a *likeness* to GOD, our *Heavenly Father*, who has a tender regard to his numerous off-spring, (to all that bear his image) however they are distinguished, or scattered up and down in the world.—There is a living intercourse betwixt the several churches of Christ, all that *hold the head*, though they meet in *distinct places*, and join in *different forms of worship*. An observance of the very same * rites in *different places* is, perhaps, as unlikely and impracticable in the present state of things, as an external communion, (or actual convention) in *one* and the *same place* of worship. True christian communion, therefore, cannot lie in these things, or depend upon particular *modes* or *places* of worship: It rather consists in an union of hearts and affections, in friendly offices and *prayers*; or, in that *unity of the Spirit* which appears in the *outward* unity of peace and concord †. And, hence it is pretty plain, (*by the way*) that there may be a *schism* (and the *worst schism*) *without a separation*: I mean, where the members of a church, (or those that join in the same worship, the same communion) have differences and dissensions

* “ The primitive Christians, says Bp. *Still*. did not
 “ make so much of any *uniformity* in rites and ceremonies.
 “ Nay, I scarce think, says he, that any churches in the primitive times can be produced, that did exactly in all
 “ things observe the same customs; which might be an argument of moderation in all, as to these things; but especially in pretended admirers of the primitive church.”
 Vid. *S. Iren. p. 66.*

† Ephes. iv. 3.

sensions amongst themselves, a spirit of pride and contention, of envy and malice one towards another †. And, it is no less evident, on the other hand, that there may be a *separation without schism*, or very consistent with christian unity. For schism, properly speaking, is not a mere *local defection*, but a *moral* one. Christians may meet in different places, and still have communion in the *spirit* of the Gospel, in true devotion, love, and charity; and this is of greater consequence and value in the sight of GOD than a mere agreement in *outward* worship, or in the *externals* of religion. All that *truly* love GOD, will love one another *, let their particular persuasion or way of worship be what it will: Or, all that bear the image of Christ will love his image where-ever they see it. And this, indeed, is the surest and most effectual *tie*, the most durable and lasting *bond* of union amongst Christians, and will subsist when all others shall cease: *Charity never faileth* †. The people of GOD may live in very distant places, and

† Note, the word, *σχίσμα*, (when it relates to the church) seems only to denote in Scripture, *divisions in a church*. If a man does not *leave* this or the other christian society; yet, if he make dissensions in it, and disturb the unity of it, he is guilty of schism. Thus it was in the church of *Corinth*: They differed about the excellencies of their teachers, (1 Cor. i. 10, 12.) about the manner and time of the holy Eucharist (1 Cor. xi. 18, 21, 22.) about the variety of gifts among them, the inferior envying the superior, and the superior despising the inferior, &c. (1 Cor. xii. 15, 21, 25.) And every one of these differences, in the places refer'd to, is called *σχίσμα*, a schism, or rent in the church: They broke the unity of it in ordinances, though there was no separation from it. * 1 John v. i. † 1 Cor. xiii. 8,

and differ in a great many things of lesser moment, and this difference may continue, in a greater or less degree, as long as the world itself: But CHARITY, (the highest and noblest grace of all, and by which they are united to Christ and one another) shall, in the light of another world, and in its *perfect* exercise, make them entirely *one*, one harmonious perfect society, without any disgust or difference for ever. All distinctions that are now founded in ignorance or weakness, shall then vanish, and perfect charity reign triumphant; for the *former things are passed away* †. — And, surely, this consideration should have some influence upon our charity in *this* life, and in its *present* exercise; to enliven all its actings, and raise it to a more noble and exalted pitch. The nearer fight we have of Heaven, the more should our mutual love and charity encrease: The more should this heavenly and divine principle exert itself, in a candid and generous behaviour towards them that differ from us, and, especially, in our *prayers* to GOD for them. We all hope, notwithstanding some little differences at present, to meet in Heaven at last: And shall we not follow our common desires and hopes with our sincere and affectionate *prayers* for each other? This is peculiarly *acceptable in the sight of GOD*, who will have all men to be saved*; nor, will any thing discover a more *catholick* and *comprehensive* charity to our christian brethren every where, than a stated and solemn remembrance of

† Rev. xxi. 4.

* 1 Tim. ii. 3.

of them in our *publick* prayers. We should make *supplication for all saints* §, as the Apostle exhorts; for all the true worshipers of G O D in every place: This is the genuine fruit, and a noble proof of christian charity; this is acting a most *lovely* and *decent*, a most *righteous* and *equitable* part; it is doing as we would be done by; and a doing good, generally speaking, in the highest instance, and in the best manner we are able. Thus it will appear that our charity is not *confined* any more than the blessing of G O D, to any particular *places*: Nay, the head of the church will take a particular *knowledge* of us, if we thus love one another; and will be *graciously present* with us in *all* our assemblies for christian worship. — And, thus, we should keep up a communion with the *catholic* church, or express our hearty and unfeigned love to all the *saints*; to *all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours* †.

I should here add, (as a further *expression* of our love, that we should be ready, upon occasion, to receive them into *communion* with us, or to join with them in a participation of divine ordinances. — There are some, indeed, whose sentiments are so *different*, and even *contrary*, that it's hardly possible for them to unite in the same society, or in the same way of publick worship and instruction; at least, not *stat- edly* and constantly. This is not to be expected but

§ Ephes. vi. 18.

† 1 Cor. i. 2.

but where persons are pretty well *agreed* in their principles *: Nor is it, indeed, necessary to that christian unity of which I have been speaking. Nay, it would be very inconvenient and hurtful in many cases: Such differing sentiments amongst those of the same communion would be apt to hinder their devotion and edification. Whilst some are pleased with one part of worship (or the management of it) others would be displeased. — But, then, where would be the *evil*, (the *harm*) of *receiving* or *joining* with our fellow Christians, upon *occasion*, and so far as we are able to do it with a safe conscience, and to our own, or others edification? We should be ready to give the *utmost* proof of our charity: But many, too many, I am afraid, are unreasonably backward, and *rigid* in the point of *external* worship and communion one with another. Christians, on every side, should take heed how they embrace limiting principles, or lay a stress upon any rites and opinions of lesser moment. — Or if, after all, their differences in judgment are really such as won't suffer them to unite, with any freedom of conscience, in the same society, or the same worship; why should this make any breach upon their christian charity? Or, why should a peaceable separation, in this case, be called a *schism* †; and those that separate,

be

* Amos iii. 3.

† Note, It is the sense of almost all the *reformed churches* and *foreign universities*, that, notwithstanding men differ in opinions and practices, yet if they accord in the foundation,

and

be branded with invidious names and marks of distinction?—We should shew a disposition and *readiness* to unite as far as may be; but, if we can't come to an unity of judgment or practice, then let christian liberty, charity, and *forbearance* take place. The unity of the church, as I hinted before, is an unity of love and affection, and not a bare uniformity of practice and opinion. True christian charity, (or an *unfeigned love of the brethren*) will teach us, in *this* as well as other things, to practise the *rule of equity*; *i. e.* to *bear* one with another, and to *do* to others as we would be dealt with: And, did we all walk according to this rule, where-

and do not publickly disturb the peace, they truly may be called friends and brethren in Christ.—The *true* unity, in this case, does *subsist*: Or, here is no separation from the church *catholick*. The best writers have owned, that he is not to be esteemed a *schismatick*, who forsakes *Rome*, or any other particular church, because of some additions not to be born; but he that turns away from the union and communion of the church universal. —He that denies not any thing, (says Mr. *Locke*) that the holy Scriptures teach in *express* words, nor makes a separation upon occasion of any thing that is *manifestly* contained in the sacred text; however he may be nick-named by any sect of Christians, and declared by some, or all of them, to be utterly void of true Christianity, yet indeed and in truth, this man cannot be either a *Heretick*, or *Schismatick*.—For, what is *Heresy*, says *our Author*; it is, [amongst those who acknowledge nothing but the Holy Scriptures to be their rule of faith] a separation made in their christian communion, for *opinions* not contained in the *express* words of Scripture: As *Schism*, for the same reason, is nothing else but a separation made in the communion of the church, upon account of something in *Divine Worship*, or ecclesiastical discipline, that

wherein we profess to be agreed, we should sooner come to agree in those things wherein we differ.

Now, the general direction of the *New Testament*, in the case before us, is this, that we receive one another, as Christ also hath received us*, *i. e.* without contention about some things in which our judgments may differ; and making no other *test*, whereby to receive persons into communion, than a *credible profession* of those things which Christ himself hath made necessary, and a *practice correspondent* to such a profession. There were some Christians, in the Apostle's time, that had a great regard to Jewish ceremonies; whilst others thought themselves entirely set free from them: Some *eat meat*, while others only *eat herbs*; some *observed* certain days as holy, while others *neglected* to observe them, &c. But they are all called to *receive one another* into christian fellowship, and not to make these *doubtful disputations* a
bar

that is not any *necessary* part of it. Both one and the other seem to signify an *ill-grounded* separation, made about things not necessary. Those, therefore, are Hereticks, says he, who separate themselves from others, by excluding them out of their communion, because they will not profess their belief of certain opinions which are not to be found in the express words of Scripture. For it is not the paucity [or fewness] of those that are separated, nor the authority of the magistrate, that can make any man guilty of *Heresy*; [and the same may be said as to *Schism*;] but he only is an Heretic who divides the church into parts, introduces names and marks of distinction, and *voluntarily* makes a separation *because of* such opinions. See *Let. of Toleration, Postscript.*

* Rom. xv. 7.

bar to their sacred union *. We should take care, says one, (speaking of this point) “ That we do not too much enlarge, nor too much narrow the principles of Christianity ; that we do not make any article of faith and practice more or less necessary than Scripture hath made it ; and that we do not raise needless scruples in our own breasts, nor in the hearts of others, by too great a separation from such as our common Lord hath received.” —

The *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, in particular, is a *symbol* of our union with Christ, and of our *communion one with another* †. By partaking of the same bread, (or of *one loaf*, which was the ancient custom) we not only declare our unity and affection, as members of *one society*, but our catholic love to all Christians, as members of *one body*. And, surely, if our love be pure and unfeigned, we shall be ready to receive one another upon the most *catholic principles* ; making nothing necessary to church communion, but what the Gospel makes necessary to salvation : And, I am much mistaken, if any thing more *can* be necessary, than what our Saviour, and his Apostles, have commanded in *express* words. — I therefore conclude, that where persons have no *capital* ‡ errors, or *customary*

* Rom. xiv. 1.

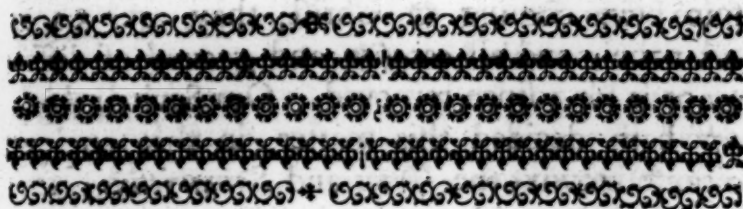
† 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

‡ A fundamental error in religion is such an one as either is directly and immediately repugnant to some article of faith necessary to be known and believed in order to salvation, or to some duty of love to God, or to our neighbour, which under pain of everlasting misery, we are obliged to perform.

stomary crimes, which do necessarily exclude 'em from being sons of G O D, members of Christ, and coheirs with *him* of his heavenly kingdom, we have no authority to reject them, and are bound in christian charity, (which *bopeth all things* *) to receive and treat them as brethren.

AND, thus, I have endeavoured to explain, in some measure) that temper of mind, or manner of worship, that seems most consonant to the gospel rule. — If we would *consecrate* places of worship, or, which is much the same thing, secure a *Divine presence* and *bleffing* in them, we should see that G O D's *name* is *recorded* (or his authority stampd) upon the worship that we perform; that the whole is agreeable to his appointment and will, without *any addition*, and in *all its parts*. The *Scriptures of truth* (so far as they give us any directions about it) and the *necessary reason of things*, should guide our worship in every place; and, especially, we should see, that *all our things be done in charity* †: We may then expect the accomplishment of this divine promise; *I will come unto thee, and I will blefs thee.*

* 1 Cor. xiii. 7. † 1 Cor. xvi. 14.



S E R M O N VII.



E X O D. XX. 24.

— *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*

FROM the former discourses upon
 F God's recording his name in places of
 publick worship, and his blessing his
 worshipping people, we are plainly
 taught, what is a truly christian and well-re-
 gulated zeal in matters of religion: Or, what
 has been said upon this subject, will help to
 guide and regulate our zeal in all things per-
 taining to the worship of God, and shew us
 where we should lay the stress of it.

AND, in the first place, it's plain, we should
 not lay our greatest stress upon PLACES of
 worship. The question, now, is not, whether
 one place is more holy, and therefore more fit
 M for

for the worship of GOD than another: For, since the coming of Christ, they are ALL ALIKE; and all *occasion* and *ground* of difference is long since removed. Our Saviour *himself* hath decided this matter, in that ancient dispute betwixt the *Jews* and *Samaritans*; and hath left it a thing quite indifferent *where* we worship GOD, if so be we worship him *in spirit and in truth* *. The difference betwixt the *temple itself*, and other places of worship, was but in *circumstance*, and that circumstance merely *ceremonial*; but as there is *no such* difference now, it must be an *ignorant* and *superstitious* zeal, that lays any great *stress* upon them.

AND the same may be said, as to all religious *rites* and *ceremonies*, which are not of GOD's own appointment. The reason of the thing is the same, as to *both*. When the distinction of *places* was laid aside, the *law of ceremonies* was abolished with it: And those, who are zealots for *either*, would do well to consider this. Our Saviour would teach us, in the place I refer to, that (together with the temple at *Jerusalem*) all those peculiar forms and ceremonies should also cease, that had long distinguished the people of the *Jews* from other nations. That *wall of partition*, which GOD *himself* erected, is now taken down; and shall any, who call *themselves* Christians, separate themselves from *others*, or separate *others* from *themselves*, by any rites of their

* John iv. 20,---4.

their own devising *; or imagine themselves more holy than others, on account of these things? — I have observed, that all those appointed marks by which GOD's people formerly were known to be his, and by which they are said to be sanctified, are now abolished. GOD thus distinguished the Jews from others, or made them holy. They were a peculiar people, and to

* All things under the law that had a typical reference or view to the christian state and worship, are now ceased, being only figures for the time then present: And, as it is needless to appoint any thing that is symbolical or analagous to them, now the antitype or substance is come; so it must be very weak and superstitious to lay any stress upon them. We have no warrant or pretence for either in the New Testament. Our Saviour, and his Apostles, are altogether silent in this matter. As we are not to continue any of those rites or ceremonies which GOD hath already abolished, so neither to practise or insist upon any of our own devising. From the words of our Saviour, I think, we can clearly demonstrate that it is unlawful to worship GOD with any rites, however indifferent in themselves, if they are not commanded by GOD himself. *Mat. xv. 9. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,* which the *Chaldee Paraphrast* and *Syriack Version* render thus; *reverentia quam mihi exhibent est ex præcepto & documento humano*, plainly imputing the reason of GOD's rejecting their worship (says Dr. *Stillington*) to the want of a divine command for what they did. And immediately he adds, it is not merely the want of a particular divine precept which makes any part of divine worship uncommanded by GOD unlawful, but the general prohibition, that nothing should be done in the immediate worship of GOD, but what we have a divine command for. *Iren. p. 6.* — And the reason of the thing seems very evident. GOD hath always appointed the method of his own worship: He prescribed every part of it to *Moses* with great exactness, and required a most accurate observance of it, in things that were merely

to them pertained *the service of GOD**, with its numerous rites and ceremonies: But he hath no where distinguished *Christians* amongst *themselves*, or from one another, by any rites of his own appointment. The plain and necessary rules of worship, that he hath now prescribed in the Gospel, are common to all: Nor, should any Christians affect to distinguish, or divide *themselves* by particular rites and observances of their own. Nay, it is a great presumption, a dangerous folly, for any to *insist*, and to *value* themselves upon these things, where they have no scripture warrant or command for them. This, at least, is *certain*, that we are not *sanctified* by such things, as the *Jews* were: They are not *ordained* by GOD, or allowed to be *necessary* in themselves: Nor should we lay such a stress upon them, as if *WE* were the only *true church*, the *favourites of Heaven*, or any *holier* and *better* men than those that

ly external, typical, and ceremonial.—And, surely, (says an ingenious modern writer) if *now* under the Gospel, “the great and holy GOD lays such a load of contempt on modes of worship, which his own wisdom once contrived, and his own authority established, [calling them *yokes of bondage, carnal ordinances, weak and beggarly elements, &c.*] I say, if he himself throws upon them such reproachful and forbidding language, when the appointed term of them is expired, can we imagine this Holy GOD will endure forms of worship of the fanciful invention of men, or that he will indulge foolish and sinful creatures, where his own appointments are revealed, to seek his favour by addressing him in methods which he hath not appointed? This must be a vain attempt, a fruitless labour, and a foolish hope.”—*Dr. Watts's Caveat, &c. p. 35.*

* Rom. ix. 4.

that differ from us. This, I am afraid, is the foolish and fond conceit of too many. We may remember that the *Jews* were often charged by the prophets, not to lay too great a stress upon the *rituals* of their religion, though appointed by GOD himself; and yet, how many are there that seem to lay their principal stress upon some distinguishing rites of their own devising, or upon some opinions and practices in their own church, which, at best, (it may be) are very *doubtful*, and of *little moment*?

THIS mistaken zeal is but too apparent in both the *instances* that I have now mentioned. As the *Jews* formerly made their boast, [*the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord* *], even when they had turned it into a *den of thieves*; so it is, (GOD knows) amongst many professors at this day. The *CHURCH*, the *CHURCH*, is the common cry in the mouths of multitudes who are a shame and disgrace to any church, and are really of none but the *synagogue of Satan*. A true *CATHOLICK*, “a son of the church, (says one) how honourable an appellation! with what views does it inspire? To what *privileges* does it entitle? In comparison of this, a *Christian* is a mean and undistinguishing character;” and seems, indeed, to be almost smother’d and lost amidst the noisy contentions, and the many favourite names and distinctions that there are

* Jerem. vii. 4

in the World. Nay, how often have we seen persons divest themselves even of common sobriety, and all sense of humanity, in order to be religious, falsely so called. They can *drink*, and *swear*, and grow *mad* for the *church*, (for the interest, or party, to which they belong) and even persecute and burn their fellow creatures, (I won't say, their fellow christians,) and all under the sanctified pretence of a zeal for GOD and religion †. But do such persons consider *what manner of spirit they are of* || ? or, that the spirit by which they are actuated is quite repugnant to the spirit of Christianity? GOD forbid, that an attachment to *any place*, or *any party*, should ever carry us such lengths as these; for in so doing, we should miserably deceive ourselves. When one says, *lo, here is Christ*, in this church; and another says, *lo, he is there*; let us not *trust to lying words*; but believe what Christ himself hath told us, that *where-ever two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them* *; and elsewhere, *GOD is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in truth* ‡: This was his reply to the woman of Sychar, and is a proper admonition to all Christians; q. d. "Alas, poor woman! hast thou no greater matter than *ceremony*, even the place of worship, to mind? *believe me*, the time is at hand, when the worship of GOD, shall be no longer tied to *this*, or *that place*: You have

† John xvi. 2.

|| Luke ix. 55.

* Mat. xviii. 20.

‡ John iv. 24.

‘ have more need to learn, *who* he is that you
‘ must worship, and *how* you may worship
“ him in an *acceptable manner*, than strive a-
“ bout *places* of worship.”

AND, again, as to *rites and ceremonies* (which are near a-kin) there are many, too many, that seem to lay their greatest stress here, as if the *life of religion*, and the *only orthodoxy* lay in these things. Like the *Jews* of old, whom the Prophet describes, they are ready to arrogate all true piety to themselves, and so say, perhaps, with as much pride and distance to all that differ from them, *stand by, come not near me, for I am holier than thou* †: [a lively description this, of almost all superstitious *zealots*, of every kind, and in every communion.]

—And thus it was with their followers afterwards, the *Scribes and Pharisees*, in our Saviour’s time: They made broad their *phylacteries, tithed mint, anise, and cummin*, and foolishly imagined that *these*, and such-like trifles, would excuse their neglect of much *greater* matters. — And, are there not *some*, are there not *many* professed Christians, in like manner, that lay out all their spirits in little controversies, about rites, and forms, and ceremonies, which God never appointed, whilst they neglect the *weightier*, the more important points, of *justice, mercy, and truth, repentance toward G O D*, and *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*; the correction of their tempers, and the amend-
ment;

† Isa. lxxv. 5.

ment of their lives ? It is no *new* observation, (and experience convinces us) that, when men have brought into the worship of God vain and trifling ceremonies of their own devising, they presently *dote* upon them, as their own offspring, even to the neglect of the great and *weighty matters of the law* : Thus, we have seen drunkards, whoremongers, profane swearers and cursers, fondly caressed by them, while sober, virtuous, and good men, have been grievously vexed and persecuted for their aversion to the *English ceremonies*. — But, is this the *spirit of Christianity*, this the *zeal* and the *charity* that the Gospel teaches, and the *antient* * *churches* practised ? — *Meliora Pii docuere parentes.*

I MUST own, indeed, that we should carefully follow the persuasions of conscience in the most
minute

* Nothing is plainer in Ecclesiastical History, than, that the ancient way of preserving peace was, to let different churches, who had no dependence in externals upon one another, enjoy their liberty to follow their own customs without contradiction. There was then, in all human rites and customs, *libera observatio* : Indifferent things remained indifferent : One did not impose them upon another : And, thus, there was no breach of true christian unity. — There is nothing, (says the learned Dr. *Still. Pref. to Iren.*) in which the primitive church deserves more to be imitated by us, than in that admirable temper, moderation, and condescension which was used in it towards all the members of it. It was never thought worth the while, says he, to make any standing laws for rites and customs that had no other original but tradition ; much less, to suspend men from her communion for not observing them. See *more to the same purpose, book p. 64, - 5, - 6.*

minute things ; (and for this reason, I would not censure or condemn any that appear to act upon *principles*, meerly for their having a *regard* to rites and ceremonies;) but then, we should not imagine that these minuter things, (for so I may call them, I hope, without any offence,) in which good men themselves differ, are those that chiefly recommend us to the favour of God: We must not imagine that we are really the better for them, or Christians, otherwise minded, the worse, for not observing them: Much less, should our zeal kindle, or rise up into wrathful anger, contention, or *persecution*, in any *shape*. This is plainly excessive, and, in all cases, unwarrantable.—And, even where it is exercised, in *lower degrees*, and in *lawful matters*, it must be always faulty where it is not *uniform* and duly *proportioned*. The *Pharisees*, as one observes, would have been superstitious in *titbing mint, anise, and cummin*, although they had not neglected the *weightier matters of the law*, (justice, mercy, and goodness,) supposing they had been *as* zealous for the one as the other, and made them to belong equally to the foundations of religion. And here, (to speak my thoughts *freely*,) I am afraid, that hardly any party amongst us is quite innocent or clear.

“ Whilst there are some amongst the truly devout, that are fond of ceremonies to a degree
 “ of superstition ; are there not others, who to
 “ avoid this sort of superstition, run into another, by placing too much in the *forbearance*
 “ of all forms and ceremonies in the worship of
 “ God?

“ GOD? Of each side, men are not contented
 “ to think their own way the most perfect; but
 “ they would fain have the things about which
 “ they differ accounted matters of great impor-
 “ tance, and can hardly have charity for one
 “ another, or allow that GOD may have a fa-
 “ vour for any but those of their own opinion.”

—Now, certainly, this is an instance of *ex-
 cess*; highly *criminal* and *prejudicial*: When
 our greatest zeal is employed about little things,
 it is *always culpable*: Nor will the pretended
purity or *orthodoxy*, the boasted *claims* or *privi-
 leges*, of any church whatever, be able to *jus-
 tify* or *excuse* it. The religion of *Jesus*, our
 common master, will teach us *another spirit*;
 and not to fix our religion in *places* and *cere-
 monies* of worship. *Reason* and *Christianity* do
 both condemn such a spirit as this; nor can we
 properly give it any better name than *superstition*
 and *bigotry*.—Shall I instance, then, in some
 things, (on the other hand,) wherein our zeal
 is never *misplaced*, and seldom *excessive*: They
 are these *three*; on which, (I apprehend,) we
 should always lay the *greatest* stress.

[1.] A *Love of truth*. I do not mean a love
 of such or such *doctrines* and *opinions*, meerly,
 as they are taught by any particular body of *men*,
 or received in *this* or *that church*, rather than in a-
 ny other. This will never fix or determine *what*
is truth: Or, the opinion of others can be no
 sufficient guide or standard to me, whereby to
find the truth, or to *judge* of it. By this rule
 the

the most wide and opposite opinions would be *all true*, and *every party* in the right : *Error* would currently pass for *truth*, and *truth* for *error*, which is oftentimes the case ; and no wonder, where persons sacrifice their understandings, and give up all freedom of thought and enquiry. — Nay, even that love, (that *steady* love) to the truth, which many of these persons pretend to, will appear, after all, to be nothing else but a *blind zeal*, or a *giddy humour*, governed only by custom or education, interest or passion, without any regard to the true nature and evidence of things. Or, if such persons should *hit upon*, or *practise the truth* in some things, whilst others mistake it, what is the truth to them ? Are they really the *wiser*, or the *better* men for it ? Not at all, it may be ; and seldom so *wise* or *good* as others. Their zeal for the truth is only a blind attachment to they know not *what*, or they know not *why*. Others may have as great a *love to truth*, as themselves ; nay, (I should think,) a much *greater*, when it appears that they are diligent and impartial, sincere and inquisitive in their searches after it.

WHAT I mean, then, by a love of truth, is a love of it for its *own sake*, and not for the sake of any that may put in a confident *claim* to it : Or, it is a love of the truth *wherever* we see it, or think we have good *evidence* of it. This is commendable and praise-worthy : It will shew that our zeal for the truth is wise and virtuous,
when

when we seek to support it by *reason*, and the *evidence of things*.——We may, indeed, mistake the truth, or err in our apprehensions about it: The best of men may sometimes see occasion to retract and alter their sentiments. (Or, the light and evidence that we have, may not be sufficient to convince *others*: And, in this case, the Apostle's advice is very good and pertinent; *hast thou faith? have it to thyself before GOD.* *)

—— But my meaning is plain, *viz.* that (in all cases) we should love whatever *appears* to us to be the truth: and love it in proportion to its appearance or *evidence* in the *understanding*.— There is a difference, I own, betwixt what is true in itself, and what may appear so to us: [Truth and falsehood, with regard to propositions, are in themselves *realities*, independent on our opinions and conclusions:] And, *strictly* speaking too, we are only obliged to love and adhere to that which is really true in itself †; and yet, *in fact*, the only method we can follow in practice is, to hold fast that which *ap-*

* Rom. xiv. 22.

† It is not, perhaps, an accurate or just way of speaking, to say we are obliged to hold fast that which appeareth to us to be true, if in itself it is really false; or that we are under an obligation to do an evil action, or believe a proposition that's false, though it appears to us to be good or true; for to be sure we must not hold fast that which appears to us to be neither good nor evil, far less must we hold fast that which appears to us to be evil. And if we can do neither of these, the only possible thing that remains, is to hold fast that, and that only, which appears to us to be good or true. A man may be condemned of his judge, for being habitually insincere, who, notwithstanding, in particular cases, he has done what is materially evil, and that sincerely, or according to the dictates of his own mind.

pears

pears to us to be true, and that alone: This must be the Apostle's meaning, when he adviseth us to *prove all things*, and *hold fast that which is good* *.

Now, this one observation, I imagine, will clearly point out to us, what is that love of the truth which is most commendable in itself, and most acceptable to God, and upon which we should always lay our greatest stress; *for example*,

A LOVE of the truth will always appear in a serious and diligent *enquiry* after it: And this I would recommend and inculcate as a matter of importance. We should endeavour to *see* the truth, as far as may be, with our own eyes, and our own *understandings*: And how can we do this without some examination or enquiry? *Truth*, (or the *evidence* of truth) is what the reason of man naturally *covets* and *requires*: It is the province of reason to *judge* of it; and, when the mind is free from any corrupt or criminal biases, it seldom errs in matters of *importance*: Truth is as *agreeable* to the understanding, as light to the eye that beholds it; and it is as *necessary* and *useful* too, in directing all our moral and religious actions.-----We should therefore seek the light of truth, by studying the scriptures impartially, and endeavouring to understand them as well as we can. Truth of every kind, and especially *religious* truth, should be *dear* to us: Or, we should *prove all things*,

* 1 Thess. v. 21.

and

and see that our *faith* and *practice* are agreeable to the mind and will of God, so far as we know it; and, especially, that we admit of nothing in the exercises of publick *worship*, but what the word of God, or the necessary reason of things, dictates to us. An honest and inquisitive mind, (or an upright heart,) is the principal thing in matters of religion, and our best security from any great or dangerous mistakes*: Or, the love of truth is the likeliest way to be led into it; the best preparative for receiving and understanding it†. Or, if persons of this temper should *mistake* the truth in lesser points, God will *accept* them‡. Even, the errors which they fall into will be less offensive to God, than the truest notions in the world by *chance*, where rational enquiry is suppressed or neglected. A man must *believe, think, and judge*, as he *can*, not as he *will*: And, where he honestly seeks the truth, or endeavours to find it, his *involuntary mistakes* will be *innocent errors*, and every whit as pleasing to God, as *accidental orthodoxy*.

HENCE it will follow, that a conscientious and habitual endeavour in every man to seek and find out the truth *himself*, must be a matter of

* 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11, 12. where the Apostle seems to intimate, that, though the lying wonders, the unrighteous and fraudulent wiles of the *man of sin*, (there spoken of) should be many; yet none need to be *deluded* thereby, if they are lovers of truth and virtue: It is only upon *others* that God, at any time, sendeth *strong delusions*.

† Isa. vi. 9.

Hos. xiv. 9.

John viii. 47. x.

27. xviii. 37.

‡ Rom. xiv. 2, 3, 6.

importance:

importance : It is an *acceptable homage* to the GOD of nature, and the duty of every reasonable creature, according to his station, ability, and opportunities in life : And it is a very commendable thing in itself *, as it is a wise and proper use of those rational powers which GOD hath given us : Nothing will yield us a truer *satisfaction* amidst the darkness and uncertainties of the present life, the doubtful reasonings of our own minds, and the many different opinions that obtain in the world.—And especially, if I add, (for this I think will also follow,) that none who are *sincere* and impartial shall ever err in *fundamentals* ; tho' more is necessary to be believed and known by some, than by others ; or what is fundamental to *one*, may not be so to *another*. I can never think it consistent with the goodness of GOD, to suffer a *sincere* † man to mistake his duty, and
err

* Acts xvii. 11. † But then the question will be, who is a sincere enquirer after truth ? (I answer, in the words of a late writer) “ Every one who is solicitous and
“ concerned to know truth and duty, that is willing to come
“ to the light to be instructed and reformed, that hath a
“ firm purpose and resolution to obey the truth in every
“ instance when discovered to him, whatever difficulties it
“ cost, whatever diminution of honour, or loss of worldly
“ interest it may occasion, that endeavours to divest him-
“ self of all prejudice, and keeps open to conviction, that
“ uses all proper means Providence offers to him for his as-
“ sistance, and in all employs such a measure of care and
“ diligence, as the nature and importance of the thing re-
“ quires, and is ordinarily attainable by Christians ; such
“ an one, I suppose, *sincere* in his enquiries : He that hath
“ *the answer*, or interrogation, of a good conscience, that
“ can apply himself to GOD, and his word as an *oracle*,
“ with

err to his destruction : GOD will hide nothing necessary to salvation from such a one.— I may remark too, that, as it is most agreeable to the wisdom and goodness of GOD, that the more *important* things of religion, (in which it is necessary for Christians to agree) should be all of them *plain* and *easy*, and upon a level with *common* capacities ; so those, which we generally apprehend and allow to be so, are clearly *revealed*, often *repeated*, and strongly insisted upon in the sacred writings ; or, in the language of the prophet, they are so *plain*, that *be that runs may read them* * : At least, when they are duly proposed, and persons have a sufficient opportunity of instruction in them, they cannot but receive them, and unite in them. It is therefore next to impossible, I say, for a sincere and honest mind to mistake, (with any hazard,) in *these* matters †. And, even, as to others

“ with a *what wilt thou have me to do ?* waiting for the
 “ *responsum*, resigned to the divine conduct, and resolved
 “ to follow it through distress, poverty, persecution, &c.
 “ and accordingly subjects every interest to that of truth,
 “ and the authority of Christ ; such an one, I doubt not,
 “ is *sincere* and impartial in his enquiries after truth ;
 “ though he fall short of the utmost diligence and endeavours, yet he giveth that preference to divine things, as
 “ shews him to be a Christian.” Bennet's *Irenicum*.

* *Hab.* ii. 2.

† He who believeth the Scripture sincerely, (says *Chilling.*—) and endeavours to believe it in the true sense, cannot possibly be an *Heretick*.—If he mistake the meaning of some doubtful places, and fall unwillingly into some errors, into which no vice or passion betrays him, and is willing to hear reason from any man, who will undertake to shew him his error ; I say, it is unreasonable

others of *less moment*, (or any points in *difference* among christians,) persons of this character, I am persuaded, stand much fairer, generally speaking, for seeing and receiving the truth than others *.

AND, as our love to the truth should appear, in our searching the scriptures diligently, and being sincerely inquisitive after it; so also, in *embracing* what appears, upon a fair examination, to be the truth of G O D, and the gospel of Christ, however contrary it may be to our *former opinions*, to the faith of our *own*, or the articles of any *other church*. There can be little virtue in an implicate faith, or blind obedience, let who will challenge or demand it of us. We should be able, (every man for himself,) to give some *reason* of our faith, and of what we apprehend to be the truth of the gospel: And where the evidence of truth appears to *prevail*, (on *one* side or the *other*,) we should readily embrace it.

AND, so long as we see good and sufficient evidence of the truth, we should *adhere to it with constancy*. *Buy the truth, and sell it not*, says Solomon †. We should not readily *part* with

reasonable to think that a G O D of goodness will impute such an error to such a Man. — And again, if I be desirous to know the truth, and diligent in searching it, and advise not at all with flesh and blood about the choice of my opinions, but only with G O D, and that reason he hath given me; if I be thus qualified, and yet through human infirmity fall into error, that error cannot be damnable. *Relig. of Protest.* * John vii. 17.

† *Prov.* xxiii. 23.

N

it;

it ; after we have taken pains to acquire the knowledge of it ; and this should be a farther instance of our *love* to it. — Not that we should be obstinate to *conviction*, or so far wrapt up in our own opinions, as to conclude no body in the *right*, or the *safe* way, but ourselves, and that all who differ from us are certainly *wrong* : There is too much confidence, and but little modesty in this way of judging, let our *knowledge*, and *capacity* for finding out the truth, be never so great.—We may be pretty sure, I think, that all the *heartly* and *sincere* lovers of truth are right in the *main* ; and it is possible, after all, that *we ourselves* may be in the wrong. We should therefore constantly pray for the divine illumination and guidance, as sensible that we are weak and *fallible* creatures at best ; and be always ready to hear what any man can say for our farther or better information. *This* is that love of the truth which is wise and rational, and highly becoming the christian character and profession.—Nor is a *constant* and *steady* adherence to the truth, any ways inconsistent with it, so long as we go upon proper evidence ; or the *same* evidence still *continues*, that determined our opinion and judgment at first. We should act in this matter as *conscience persuades* ; or be just and true to the light we have, and to our present sentiments of things : For I am persuaded, that *conscience*, (how light a matter soever some persons may make of it,) is very much concerned in steadfastly adhering to what we *apprehend*
to

to be the truth, how wide or different soever it may be from the apprehensions of others *.

AND hereupon, we should be ready to *appear for the truth; to maintain and defend it,*

* Shall I recite a Passage from the late excellent Mr. *H. Grove* which is much to this purpose? “Not joining in external communion, out of a principle of *conscience*, with those from whom a man differs in his opinion of the truth of some things imposed and professed, and the lawfulness of other things practised, in that communion, is really joining or agreeing with all the *sincere* members of that communion, in what is of greater moment, than external communion can be; even in following what he *apprehends* to be the truth, and keeping a *good conscience*. This he does in *separating from* such a particular communion, as they do by *continuing* in it. So that whatever differences there are between them, they are united in the *bond of integrity*, which is that which holds all the faithful followers and subjects of Christ together, and not an *unity of opinion*, or *uniformity* in modes of worship.” And what he means by *sincerity*, he tells us elsewhere. “I would not overstrain the definition of sincerity, (says he) as I apprehend a certain writer hath done, [*Dr. Waterland’s importance*, p. 159.] as if there must be no prepossession, no bias, no leaning to a side, or there can be no sincerity; for wherein then will *sincerity* differ from *perfection*? ’Tis enough that a man hath no prejudice inconsistent with a prevailing love of the truth; for this, in short, is what I understand by sincerity, even such a love of the truth, as engages men to search for it, as for hid treasure, and having found it to lay it up in their hearts, and to practice in all things agreeably to it; or, — in other words, a constant endeavour to *know* and *do* the will of God. This, I will venture to say, is the only necessary qualification of a faithful subject in the kingdom of Christ, the glorious characteristic of every such person, that which secures the professors of the gospel an infallible title to the favour and approbation of their common Lord, and ought therefore to recommend and endear them to one another.” See his *Serm. on the nature of Christ’s kingdom*, p. 24, 25, 36.

and even to *suffer* for it, as a further testimony of our love to it. Here we should shew our fidelity and courage, our prudence and moderation both. There is a difference betwixt some truths, some articles of faith and others, in point of *certainly* and *moment* : We can never think it, (*v. g.*) of equal *necessity* to believe that Christ suffered *under Pontius Pilate*, as that he suffered *at all* ; or of equal *evidence* and *importance*, that he *descended into hell*, as that he rose from the dead, and *ascended into heaven*. And there is the like difference in many other points, (that I could easily mention ;) which should always direct and adjust our *regard* to them, and our *zeal* for the propagation and *support* of them. We should never sacrifice *any* truth to self-interest and passion, or out of a compliment to the understandings of other men : A regard is due to truth *as truth*, and so far as it appears to be truth : But we should contend more earnestly for *some* truths than for others. Courage and fortitude well becomes the professors of christianity, in defending the *great* and *important* truths of it : Nor can we plead, or appear, too *strenuously* for them, so long as we do it with a spirit of *love* and *meekness* *, and in a modest and christian manner : For we should always remember, what the apostle *James* tells us, that *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of GOD* †. We should *strive* and *contend earnestly* for the *faith of the gospel* ‡ : But we should always do it

* Ephes. iv. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 25. † James i. 20.
‡ Philip. i. 27. Jude 3.

in a dispassionate manner, and with the greatest calmness and composure : Not with the sword of contention, but with solid arguments, and serious expostulations, and by the *manifestation of truth to every man's conscience* *. We should appeal to the understanding, and convince the judgment, and defend even the greatest truths, or oppose the greatest errors, with no other weapons, but the *armour of light*. No pretended concern for the honour of Christ, and the truths of the gospel, will sanctify an unhallowed flame, or justify that bitter zeal, that *envying and strife*, which breeds *confusion and every evil work* †.

—The truth is, we should never *impose* our own opinions upon others ; but encourage them to search the scriptures, and judge for themselves. We should not wish it in our power to revenge ourselves upon all that have the boldness to differ from us ; or shew our displeasure against them by hard names, angry threatenings, severe and rash censures, or by endeavouring to injure them in their reputations or worldly interests. This is no way suitable to the spirit of christianity ; nor is it ever likely to *answer* or *succeed*. The mouths of *gainsayers* will never be stopt by reproach and violence, or by any harsh or sanguinary methods : We should rather endeavour, (as the apostle adviseth his son *Titus*,) to *exhort* and *convince* them by *sound doctrine* ‡ ; by gospel motives, and the strongest arguments that we can draw from reason and scripture : All should be done in the most ration-

* 2 Cor. iv. 2.

† James iii. 16.

‡ Titus i. 9.

al, fair, prudent, and candid manner : And then ; if (at any time,) we *suffer* in *so* doing, we should *take it patiently* * ; for *this is acceptable with G O D* ; it argues a commendable *zeal*, and an unfeigned *love* of the truth. Or, (as the *apostle* speaks in another place,) if we *suffer reproach* and *persecution*, as *Christians*, for the *gospel's* sake, or for the *truth's* sake, we need not be *ashamed*, *troubled*, or *afraid* ; but should rather *rejoice*, and *glorify G O D on this behalf* †.

UPON the whole ; we should never betray the least truth through shame or cowardice, or for any secular carnal interest ; and the degree of our zeal should always be proportioned to the *importance* of those truths that we espouse and maintain.—To this end we should learn carefully to distinguish between *necessaries* and *non-necessaries* ‡ : Or, “ We should never make
“ any

* See 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20. † Chap. iii. 14—18, and Chap. iv. 12, 13, 14, 16.

‡ “ There is no more certain sign, (says the great *Chill.*)
“ that a point is not evident, (and by consequence necessary
“ or fundamental,) than that honest, understanding, and
“ indifferent men, and such as give themselves liberty of
“ judgment, after a mature consideration of the matter,
“ *differ* about it.” And so, (on the other hand, I may
say,) those things in which all wise and good Christians,
in all ages and places, have always *agreed*, we generally
and justly reckon *essential* and *necessary* : Inasmuch, that to
dispute or deny them would be to *unchristiannize* ourselves.
“ That is not *philosophy*, (says one of the ancients) which
“ is peculiar to *this* or *that* sect ; but whatever of truth is
“ to be found in any of them : And the same may be said
“ of *christianity*, (says Mr. *Howe* ;) it is not that which
“ is

“ any thing necessary in religion which God
 “ hath not *made* so, and *declared* to be so, which
 “ we have not clear *evidence* is so, and which our
 “ brethren, (who may be as honest and wise
 “ as we,) can neither see necessary nor true :
 “ And, till we do this, we may *bite* and *de-*
 “ *vour one another*, but shall never coalesce as
 “ Christians, and preserve that love, harmony,
 “ and decorum that becomes the christian pro-
 “ fession”. *

(2.) THE *practice of righteousness*, upon the great and common principles of christianity, in which we are all agreed, is another thing which demands our greatest attention and zeal : Or, *ministers* and *people* should both lay their *greatest stress* here. Do we, indeed, *love* the truth, and profess to *embrace* it? Let us never *hold the truth in unrighteousness* †, or do any thing that is *unbecoming* or *inconsistent* with our professed love to it, either in worship or conversation. Our righteousness, as christians, is, (in the general,) our conformity to the gospel-rule, or to what we apprehend to be the *true* sense of that rule. Righteousness is, strictly speaking, a regularity, or truth in *actions*, conformable to truth in the *understanding*, and to our *real* sentiments in religion. Or, it is a sincere and prevailing regard, in *heart* and *life*, to the *great*, the *undoubted* truths and principles

“ is appropriated to this or that party, but whatever of sincere religion shall be found common to them all.”

* *Bennet's Iren.*

† Rom. i. 18.

of christianity ; the practice of *piety* and *morality*, or of true religion in *all its branches*: This is *righteousness* : And the *doctrines* of christianity, (those, I mean, that are of the highest *importance* in themselves, that are attended with the clearest *evidence*, and like to have the most powerful *influence* upon our practice,) these are a standing *rule* of righteousness to *all* Christians : They are what we *all agree* in ; and should *all* agree to lay the greatest *stresses* upon : Or, a *practical* conformity to *this* rule should be our *principal study*, our *grand care*, and our *constant endeavour*. What will the truest notions in religion, or the purest worship in the *world* signify, if the temper and life, and the *moral* actions are not agreeable thereto ? The great things which *the grace of G O D teacheth*, are piety and humility, meekness and temperance, justice and mercy, universal righteousness, equity and benevolence : *These* are what the laws of christianity very expressly enjoin, and what the peculiar principles and motives of the gospel do in the strongest manner *enforce*. The little *peculiarities* of a party are nothing, when compared to these great points of *practical* religion ; nor is any *party-cause* worth the espousing, any further than it hath a tendency to cherish virtue ; and to promote holiness in our lives. And yet, how many are there, who advance a *party-religion* in the place of *real* religion ; who are more zealous for a *form*, than they are for the *power* of godliness ; “ more concerned for a *ceremony*, “ than for the *substance* of religion ; for a *tile* in
“ the

The Gospel Sanctuary. 185

“ the *roof*, than for a *stone* in the *foundation*; or
“ who appear to contend so earnestly for the
“ *pinnacles* of the temple, as if they threatened
“ to overturn the *foundations* of the church?”

The matters which they contend about, relate not at all to the *being* of religion, or to the *essentials* of christianity; but only, as some think, to the more *decent*; and others to the *purser* exercise of religious worship. — And the same may be said, as to *most* of those things that are *debated* amongst Christians. They are, generally speaking, useless opinions, or matters of speculation, and have but little influence upon a virtuous and good life. — I might here take notice of a great many *questions* or *opinions*, in religion, as to which, (without any detriment to the faith that makes us christians,) we may be safely ignorant of the truth, or suspend our opinion, or conjecture what is false through humane suspicion and infirmity: A man may be ignorant of them, (as some have well observed,) without any prejudice to the *christian faith*, or *err* about them without any imputation of *heresy* *. — And there are some things too, relating to

* Such, *v. g.* are the several questions about the *terrestrial* and the *celestial* paradise; the state of separate souls, and the habitation of the blessed; the number and power, the office and employment of good angels; the nature and place of hell; the punishment of the wicked; the fall of angels, the time of it, the manner and kind of their offence, and the reasons of their non-redemption; as likewise, whether our glorified bodies will have the same senses and affections, or altogether different; what society or converse we shall

to *worship* and *practice*, of which we may say, what the *apostle* says of *meat*; that they *commend us not to GOD*: For neither if we use them, are we the better; neither if we use them not, are we the worse*. Why, then, should any persons be over-zealous or fond of these things; or judge and condemn one another on the account of them †? If such things commend us not to GOD, why should they divide us amongst ourselves, destroy our charity, or alienate our affections? We are all agreed, that repentance, faith, holiness, and obedience, are the most momentous and indisputable matters of religion: In these and such like things, all *Christians* are united; and they should not squabble or quarrel about other things. We should never contend for them, on either hand, with the loss or hazard of these more weighty matters, in which the substance of religion does consist; or so as to impair that charity and peace,

shall have with the several orders of angels; how far we shall know or be known by one another; and whether in any particular manner we shall stand affected to those that are our friends and relations, and acquaintance in *this life*: These, and a great many other questions of a like nature, we cannot certainly resolve: They are very hard, if not impossible, to be determined by any clear evidence of scripture: But at the same time, we are very sure, (and this may suffice us at present,) that all the necessary principles of religion, and the important rules of righteousness, that are built upon them, are plain and easy, and in the clearest and fullest manner revealed to us, in the Bible.

* 1 Cor. viii. 8:

† Indignum est ut propter ea quæ nos Deo neque digniores, neque indigniores possunt facere, alii alios vel condemnemus, vel judicemus. *Aug.*

that

that unity and edification, in which the welfare of the church, and the interests of society are so nearly concerned.

To conclude this head. We should rather study to be good Christians, than party-zealots: And should always remember, that the great articles of the Christian faith, (of which the *apostle's creed*, as we call it, has been thought a good summary,) are so many arguments and reasons, motives and encouragements to a good life; and that where they have not this effect, our *faith is vain*; we have *received* the gospel, the *grace of G O D*, to little purpose; and all our religion is but a *nominal* and *fruitless* thing.

(3.) *THE exercise of christian charity*, (I chiefly mean with respect to religious differences,) is the last thing that I shall mention, and what crowns all. We should not only love the truth, and practise righteousness; but we should follow (or hold) the *truth in love*, which is a mark of the true church; and, to righteousness, or *virtue*, &c. * we should always *add charity*. This, indeed, is an eminent *branch* of righteousness, as it is a conformity to the gospel rule, and the *fundamental* law in Christ's kingdom †. There is not a more reasonable, just, and equitable thing in the world, than the exercise of christian charity. We owe it to all honest and good Christians in general; to all, of every persuasion, that love the truth, and live up

* 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. † John xiii. 34, 35.

to it, how much soever they may differ from ourselves. *Sincerity* in all our religious enquiries, and religious practices; and charity, with respect to all our religious differences, and our treatment of others, are the two principal things that *recommend* religion, that render it an *acceptable, useful, and amiable* thing, and give it all its *value* and *credit* with judicious and sober persons. True religion, or righteousness, infers charity; and charity *peace*, with all its consequent *blessings*; and herein the *kingdom of GOD consists* *. Next to *integrity* is *charity*, or next to *purity* is *peace*. We should first *have salt in ourselves*, and then *have peace one with another* †. *The wisdom which is from above, is first pure and then peaceable* ‡. And accordingly the apostle has given us this rule: *Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart* ||. His advice is well worthy of observation: *Follow righteousness, &c.* intimating that, when there is *righteousness*, and *faith* (in the great, the important principles of christianity,) it is *charity* and *peace* that must supply the place of other things, or stand in the stead of an exact or perfect unity in lesser matters.

Now, the better we are acquainted with ourselves and with mankind, the more will the *necessity* and *usefulness* of this advice appear.—The natural *imbecility* of our minds, and the dif-

* Rom. xiv. 17. † Mark, ix. 50. ‡ James iii.
17. || 2 Tim. ii. 22.

ferent complexion and size of our understandings, together with the different use and improvement that we have made of them, will in a great measure prevent a *sameness* of opinion, or an *uniformity* of judgment in many things; and will therefore afford a constant occasion for the exercise of christian charity. The various rites and customs of the church arise from men's different *apprehensions* of things. Hence it is, that many learned, wise, and good men allow of ceremonies, whilst others cannot receive them: Nor is it to be wondered at, that all pious and learned men should not exactly see and judge of things alike. It has been judiciously observed, by a noted writer of the last age, " That there is
" such a thing as a *mental taste*, whereby men
" differ from one another: Which, in the kind
" of it, is as common to men, as human nature,
" but as much diversified in individuals, as men's
" other inclinations are, that are most fixed, and
" least apt to admit of change. And we are
" no more to wonder, says he, at these peculi-
" arities in the tempers of mens minds, than at
" their different tastes of meats and drinks; much
" less to fall out with them that their minds
" and notions are not just formed as ours are:
" For we should remember, they no more differ
" from *us*, than we do from *them*; and if we
" think we have the clearer light, 'tis like
" they also think they have clearer". * Or it is
possible

* " And it is in vain to say, who shall be judge? For
every man will at length judge of his own notions for
himself,

possible, that others may differ from *us*, with as much sincerity, as we differ from *them*. And from hence we may naturally and justly infer, that since there may be the same *integrity* in persons of different communions, there ought to be mutual *charity*, patience and forbearance. Were all persons of one opinion, there would be no room for the exercise of these graces: Nor is there any harm in their being of *many* opinions, as to these lesser matters, so long as they preserve and cultivate such a spirit as this. Would it not be far better, upon all accounts, than ignorance, bigotry, and superstition? We shall never shew ourselves to be of a truly *christian* spirit, until we have *peace* one with another, and *charity* towards all that differ from us. Bigotry to a church, and an unpeaceable factious spirit *in* it, are the two things that make and constitute *schism*. We should not only love those of our own communion, but all honest and good men of every persuasion. For persons to *confine* their charity, argues too much their *want* of charity: And *bigotry*, after all, is the most dangerous *schism*; the guilt whereof a man is not necessarily involved in, or secured from, by being of *this*, or *that*, or *any* party of Christians. It was an excellent saying of a *learned* and *grave* *divine* *: "I am too much a catholick, to be

" himself, and cannot help it: for no man's judgment, (or relish of things, which influences his judgment, though he know it not) is at the command of his will; and much less of another man's." See *Memoirs* of Mr. *How's* life, fol. p. 56, 7.

* Mr. *Philip Henry*.

" a roman

“ a *roman catholick*”; i. e. he was too much a Christian to confine his charity to a party, or limit salvation to his own communion. I would recommend the same spirit to all dissenting protestants, and to you in particular. Let us see that we are a *catholick* society, and that we act upon the most generous catholick principles; and we cannot produce a better evidence that we belong to the catholick church of Christ.

AND let me observe further, that, as there will be constant occasion for the exercise of such a spirit, in the present state of things, so the writings of the *new testament* almost every where recommend and encourage it. There is nothing which our blessed saviour hath more frequently inculcated; and he lays it down as a particular favourite precept, and solemn charge upon all his followers*. Saint *Paul* hath likewise given us the same advice, (and we should look upon it as a standing rule or canon in the church,) “ *Let all your things be done in charity*” †. When there were different opinions in his time, as to meats and drinks, &c. the rule was; “ *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*”. ‡ and then, let him exercise charity to those that are of another mind. Nay, we should be ready to part with all that which is no essential part of our religion, for *charity*, which is so; every lesser duty ceasing to be a duty, when it hinders

* John xiii. 34, 5.
xvi. 5.

† 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

‡ Rom.

the performance of a greater. The sacred writings take it for granted, that Christians *will* differ; and therefore we are exhorted to keep, [“ not an unity of opinions in the bands of ignorance, nor an unity of *profession* in the bands of hypocrisy ”; but] the *unity of spirit in the bond of peace* *. It is *herein* that true christian unity does consist. Or, “ our union to Christ and one another, (says the excellent bishop *Hoadley*,) consists in an union of faith and love, and not in an outward uniformity of worship: So that to compel men to this outward uniformity, either by using them as schismatics, from the body of Christ, or as unfit and dangerous members of the civil society, is not just, either in *politicks* or *christianity*.”

“ Difference

* Note, the apostle means no more than this, when he exhorts us, elsewhere, to *speake the same thing*, and *join together in the same mind*, and *in the same judgment*, &c. (1 Cor. i. 10.) not that we can be all of the same opinion, or entertain the same sentiments in religion: This is not in any man's power: But by the *same mind*, must be meant the same charity and good-will; or, at least such a sameness of mind and judgment, as secureth the unity and peace of the church. He here exhorts the *Corinthians*, not all to *think*, but only all to *speake* the same thing; not that there be amongst them no difference of judgment, but that there be no schisms upon occasion of those differences. So in the Phil. iii. 16. τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν, to mind the same thing, is to have the same love: It is to do nothing through contention; but to have the like hearts, and like affections one towards another. And, elsewhere, *be of one mind, live in peace*, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. He does not exhort to that union which excludes diversity of opinion touching lesser matters, but to that rather which consists in peace and concord, and excludes distance of affection; not so much to *uniformity* as *unanimity*.

“ Difference in principle, as one observes,
 “ * will always subsist in all communities: Sum-
 “ maries of faith are no sure guard against
 “ them: And why should we make an idol of
 “ uniformity in religious worship, when we
 “ may every day see from the works of nature,
 “ that such a dull uniformity can be neither na-
 “ tural nor engaging? The beauty and true
 “ order of the *moral* and *christian* world, like
 “ that of the *natural*, consists in *uniformity* with
 “ variety”, and in the exercise of charity amidst
 this variety †. An unity of hearts is better than
 uniformity

* See *Old Whig*, N^o. 62, and 8.

† Shall I subjoin here the authority and suffrage of some
 of the great writers of the church. “ It is most certain,
 “ (says *Chilling.*) that to reduce Christians to unity of com-
 “ munion, there are but two ways that may be conceived
 “ probable; the one by taking away diversity of opinions
 “ touching matters of religion; the other by shewing that
 “ the diversity of opinions which is amongst the several sects
 “ of Christians, ought to be no hindrance to their unity in
 “ communion. Now the former of these, says he, is not
 “ to be hoped for without a miracle, unless that could be
 “ done which is impossible to be performed, though it be
 “ often pretended; [*i. e.* unless it could be made evident
 “ to all men, that *G O D* hath appointed some visible judge
 “ of controversies, to whose judgment all are to submit them-
 “ selves:] what then remains but that the other way must
 “ be taken, and Christians must be taught to set a higher
 “ value upon those points of faith and obedience wherein
 “ they agree, than upon those matters of less moment where-
 “ in they differ, and understand that agreement in *those*
 “ ought to be more effectual to join them in one communi-
 “ on, than their difference in *other* things of less moment
 “ to divide them. When I say in one communion, I mean,

O

“ in

uniformity in things indifferent: And it may very much tend to moderate and reconcile the

“ in a *common profession* of those articles of faith wherein
 “ all consent, a *joint worship* of GOD after such a way
 “ as all esteem lawful, and a *mutual performance* of all those
 “ works of charity which Christians owe to one another.
 “ And to such a communion what better inducement
 “ could be thought of, than to demonstrate that what was
 “ universally believed of all *Christians*, if it were joined
 “ with a love of truth, and with holy obedience, was sufficient to bring men to heaven? For why should men be
 “ more rigid than GOD? Why should any error exclude
 “ any man from the church’s *communion*, which will not
 “ deprive them of eternal *salvation*? — And to the same
 purport, (says Dr. *Stilling.* in his *Iren.* p. 121) “ Were
 “ we so happy but to take off things granted *unnecessary* by
 “ all, and *suspected* by many, and judged *unlawful* by some,
 “ and to make nothing the bonds of our communion but
 “ what Christ hath done, viz. *one faith, one baptism, &c.*
 “ allowing a liberty for matters of indifferency, and bearing
 “ with the weakness of those who cannot bear things
 “ which others account lawful, we might indeed be restored much sooner to a true primitive lustre. — And he
 presently adds, “ GOD will one day convince men that
 “ the unity of the church lies more in the unity of faith
 “ and affection, than in the uniformity of doubtful rites and
 “ ceremonies. — Again, what harm is it, (says the
 “ pious and learned Dr. *More,*) to preface so well of the
 “ reformation, as that after the decursion of the years
 “ of their childhood, GOD will ripen Christians into a
 “ more manly sense of the great and indispensable duties
 “ of the gospel, —and reprove them sharply, if they leave
 “ not off their animosities about toys and trifles, and hold
 “ fast to the royal law of love? *Gal. v. 15.* If ye bite and
 “ devour one another, ye shall be consumed one of another.
 “ — And elsewhere, a mutual agreement in bearing
 “ with one another’s dissents in the non-fundamentals of
 “ religion, is really a greater ornament of christianity, than
 “ the most exact uniformity imaginable; it being an eminent
 “ exercise of *charity*, the *flower* of all christian graces,
 “ and the best way, perhaps, at the long run, to make
 “ the church as uniform as can possibly be desired”.

tempers

tempers of men, to consider, that most of our troublesome controversies do not concern points *fundamental*. Thanks be to GOD, our differences are neither about faith nor manners: We all believe in one and the same *GOD*, hope to be saved by one and the same *redeemer*, desire to be sanctified by one and the same *spirit*, receive one and the same *scriptures*, assent to the same important *doctrines*, and acknowledge the necessity of the same duties: Our disputes are only about lesser matters; as modes, forms, gestures, and doubtful speculations, which the original frame of human nature, and the circumstances of the world, seem to render unavoidable; in all which, *charity* should supply the place of *unity*, and is the only possible and likely way to promote it *.

FINALLY,

* That the only way to preserve church unity is the exercise of Christian charity, seems to me a very plain and unquestionable truth. Not to say that our unity, so long as we continue to differ in opinion, *consists* in brotherly love and charity, I would here more particularly remark, that charity is the only way to *further* and *promote* an unity in those things wherein we yet differ, and to bring about a more general uniformity. It must be always the part of genuine charity to allow of Christian liberty: I mean a liberty of judgment and enquiry in matters of religion, as well as a liberty of conduct in things that appear doubtful or indifferent. Nay, true charity will *encourage*, or at least *allow* every man a liberty to propose his own sentiments or scruples, in order to propagate the truth, or to gain further light. We should *endeavour* to believe the scriptures in their true sense, and require no more of others. This is a point of common equity, the duty of every man, and what we should always encourage: And the standing up for a generous liberty in this case, is not only very *consistent*

FINALLY, if we are of contentious spirits, if we have strife and envy in our hearts, and be not of a peaceable and quiet temper, we have just reason to suspect we are not hearty and sincere in that religion we profess: We are not children of the God of love and peace; nor have we yet attained to that spiritual *wisdom which is from above* *. It is an absurdity and a mere contradiction, for a man to say that he is religious, at the same time, he is malicious and uncharitable: Tho'

with all that charity and brotherly love that is required of us, either by reason or scripture, but the most noble fruit and evidence of it. This is the *best* way, (far better than humane authority,) to suppress *heresy*, and restore *unity*: Nay, the *only* way, as I now said, to bring about that further union or agreement amongst protestants, which has been much desired, but in vain attempted hitherto. Whereas the *urging* or *compelling* men to uniformity, (on the other hand,) is the *loss* of unity, as it argues some mistake or defect in point of charity, and as it is a manifest encroachment upon Christian liberty. It has been recommended as a very healing pacifick rule, *viz. In necessariis unitas, in non-necessariis libertas, in utrisque charitas*. When such a necessary thing as unity, (says one,) is placed in unnecessaries it is lost, but when it is placed in things like itself, *i. e.* in necessary things, then it is preserved. St. Paul, who as well understood, and as much desired unity as any, would lay *no other burden upon Christians than necessary things*, or things which at *that* time all persons agreed were necessary. And, accordingly, those bishops in the primitive times were thought very much in the right, who made a decree in council, (touching the observation of *Easter*,) called *Adiaphoron*, leaving the observation of it *indifferent*, as men would themselves. *Soc. hist. lib. 5. ch. 10.*—Certain it is, that principles of *charity* and *liberty* always tend most to *unity*, and whatever makes for peace and unity, always tends most to *edification* and the *encrease of the body*. See *Rom. xiv. 19.* and *Ephes. iv. 16.*

* James iii. 14, 15, 16, 17.

we may talk and profess ever so much of religion; yet the word of GOD is plain, that whosoever has not love and charity is no *Christian*. The kingdom of *GOD*, the kingdom of *Christ* consists in *peace*, or in a *peaceable behaviour* amongst men *; and whatever tends to break the peace amongst his subjects, and tends to alienate their affections, and inflame their passions, is a rude violation of the laws and government of the *prince* of peace. We can neither belong to Christ's kingdom on earth, or the kingdom of heaven, unless we are lovers of her peace. In order to our enjoyment of the *beatifick vision*, we must not only follow *holiness*, but *peace*; for without following both, *no man shall see the Lord* †: "Let his parts be never so excellent, " let his *principles* or *party*, his person or *profession* be what they will; let him be born " of *godly parents*, or brought up in the bosom " of the *purest church*: when or where-ever he " is found, or howsoever *distinguished*; yet unless he follow peace, and peace with all men, " his eyes shall never see this blessed vision".

—Putting away therefore all *bitterness*, and *wrath*, and *clamour*, and *evil speaking with all malice* ‡; let us labour to promote love and charity, peace and unity, and seek the welfare of the communities to which we belong, that *in the peace thereof we may have peace*. It is the commandment and advice of the great apostle; *put on therefore, (as the elect of GOD, holy and*

* Rom. xiv. 18.
iv. 32, 33.

† Heb. xii. 14.

‡ Ephes.

beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, forgiving one another *. Could our religion once prevail upon us to follow after *these* things, and to contend less for *meat* and *drink*, and things indifferent, which we may either *do*, or leave *undone*, and yet be acceptable to God, and approved of all good men; could it cool our heats and animosities, and make us have no other contest, (although we differ in some lesser matters,) but who should do most *good*, or shew the greatest *kindness*, to his christian brother: this would be the best argument of its divine original, and recommend it to the world with the greatest advantage.

AND thus I have pointed out, (and insisted pretty largely upon,) some things, which deserve our greatest attention, and the general regard of all christians. We seldom exceed, (and it's hardly possible, in the things that I have now recommended, *viz.* in the *love of truth*, the *practice of righteousness*, and the *exercise of christian charity*: Nay, God knows, we are, generally speaking, more *defective* here, than we are in other matters; though nothing, (I think,) is plainer, than that we ought to lay our *greatest stress* upon them, as ever we would recommend religion, or act an honest and consistent part, as genuine members of the christian church. — In short, they are the principles of all true *protestants*, that I am now pleading for:

* Colos. iii. 12, 13.

The sufficiency and perfection of the scripture rule, without the help of human schemes, articles, &c. the purity of divine worship, as practised by the apostles and first christians; the calling no man master upon earth, and acknowledging Christ to be sole king in his church, and LORD of conscience: These, I say, and others that stand nearly connected with them, are the great principles of the *reformation*, upon which it stands, and by which alone it can be supported: Such are, a liberty of private judgment and free enquiry, an impartial love to truth, and freedom of conscience in the exercises of divine worship; peace and charity, mutual forbearance, moderation, and good will. These are the principles which, as christian protestants, we should always maintain and defend, *standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*. Our interest, if we rightly understand ourselves, is that of plain and common christianity: And “ the principles we go upon, (as “ one observes,) are such, as men of the best “ sense and fortune need not be ashamed to “ own and espouse: They are no other than “ those of universal christianity, what the *Dissen-* “ *ters* hold in common with all true protestants, “ and will stand as long as there is truth, honour, “ and humanity in the earth, or a good and “ Almighty GOD in heaven”.—— We should all learn to lay our chief stress upon the great principles of moral and evangelical righteousness, and remember that the great and essential things which constitute the kingdom of GOD, (that

kingdom of GOD, which, our Saviour says, *cometh not with observation, or pomp and splendour; but is within men,*) are not *meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to GOD, and approved of men.* “There is no party, but a man may
 “be moulded into the notions and forms by
 “which it is distinguished, and yet remain un-
 “acceptable to GOD; but there is no party of
 “christians, wherein righteousness, and peace,
 “and joy in the Holy Ghost will not evidence
 “a man a true subject of the kingdom of GOD,
 “a servant of Christ, and most acceptable to
 “both”. At the same time, that we are advocates for truth, and zealous for the purity of Divine Worship, we should always shew an equal concern for holiness and peace, for liberty and charity. A zeal that is restrained to some things, and overlooks others of equal or greater goodness, and necessity, can never be of the right kind; nor will it ever gain us much reputation.

UPON the whole then; let you and I both learn to lay our greatest stress here. — I am verily persuaded, that where Christ owns *any ministry* with success, the main tendency of it will evidently be to promote the most momentous and indisputable matters of religion, and not the little peculiarities of a party. — And the same may be said of *every true Christian*: Let him be of *this, or that, or any party*, he is
 one

one that always prefers the most important matters of religion, to the lesser things by which his own party is distinguished. The further progress he makes in *religion*; the better he understands *himself*, his *bible*, and the things in difference; the more *charity* he will always discover, as to these inferior points. And yet, I am afraid, that charity is a thing which many, too many who call themselves Christians, have but a very defective notion of; and, that how much soever they may magnify the *name*, they are too much strangers to the *thing*. Oh! when shall the time the happy time come, when all the names of reproach, and of odious distinction, the great instruments of schism, shall be laid aside, and the followers of Christ be known by their proper *characteristick*, that they *love one another*! Perhaps this blessing is more eminently reserved for the latter ages, after the conversion of the *Jews*, and the coming in of the *Gentiles*, when there shall be *one Lord and his name one* *, and the people shall *serve Him*, according to ancient prophecy †,) *with one shoulder, one consent*.— In the mean while, let us join together in our hearty prayers and wishes for this *great event*, for the commencement of that *happy state and period* of the church, when all true Christians, (bearing with the infirmities of the weak, and receiving one another into communion,) shall *with one mind, and one mouth glorify G O D*,

* Zech. xiv. 9.

† Zeph. iii. 9.

even the father of our Lord Jesus Christ * ; when the zeal of professors shall be chiefly spent about the unquestionable points of vital religion ; when *sobriety, righteousness, and real godliness*, which are the great and indispensable design of the gospel †, shall be the measure of all our zeal and activity in *other* matters ; and shall make us cease our angry contentions about rites and opinions, and other things, which make neither *for* nor *against* this grand design : “ Thus will the “ *reformed churches be no longer, cities of di-* “ *vision or confusion, but clear up at length in-* “ *to one holy city of G O D*”. And thus will the *Christian, the Protestant church, be the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth.*

* Rom. xv. 3.

† Tit. ii. 11, 12.

29 MR 59





A

Divine Meditation,

IN SEVERAL

S E C T I O N S;

Offered as an

APPENDIX to the foregoing DISCOURSES.



FROM the worship of the christian church, or *sanctuary* of GOD, in this world, we may enlarge our views, and raise our thoughts to the regions of the blessed, even *the spirits of just men*, that are released from the infirmities and miseries of this mortal life, and are *made perfect* in *knowledge*, *holiness*, and *love*. There the subjects of Christ's kingdom, the saints and servants of GOD in every age, shall see things in another, a diviner light: And the contemplation and hope of such a state, assisted by the clearer evidences of the christian revelation, might go a great way to soften the prejudices, and heal the differences

differences, which are found amongst them at present, and which so unhappily divide, even, good men amongst themselves. They *know but in part*; and their *piety* and *love* too, in the present life, are greatly *defective*, especially the latter. It is true, they love GOD sincerely; their *brethren* also, their fellow-christians, and all mankind: This is a character essential to every good man: But their love and charity one towards another, is sadly weak and imperfect. That which should be their tie and union, as a society of christian brethren, who agree in the same faith, and live in the same hope of an heavenly inheritance; that which should cement them together in all friendly offices, as members of the same body; and amidst their differing sentiments, and various attainments in knowledge and piety, should make them more entirely ONE in *Christ Jesus*, the head of their profession; this, (I say,) is oftentimes sadly weak and languid, and is hardly effectual, in many cases, to unite even christians of the same society, the same communion, amongst themselves. But, *when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away* *. The tie of charity shall then be *stronger*, and more *extensive*, and take in all that truly fear GOD, the whole community of the faithful in every age, and all sincere christians, howsoever distinguished, in every part of the world. They shall then shine in knowledge and holiness, and be for ever united in love to GOD, and one another; or, they shall

* 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

shall have all the knowledge of which they are capable, and feel a vigour of affection answerable to it.—This constitutes the happiness of heaven.

“ Knowledge and love make spirits blest,
“ Knowledge their food, and love their rest*.

SHALL I reflect a little upon each of these, consider them in their harmony and exercise, and in their joint influence upon the personal and social happiness of reasonable Beings. Such an elevation and exercise of the mind, must be pleasant and profitable, and divinely natural to a serious spirit.—I might observe, that they are highly necessary and advantageous in the *present life*, and for the various ends and purposes of our abode in *this world*. They are of great importance and use to *single persons*, and *societies* of men, in every calling; and to the peace, the happiness, and good order of the *world* in general: And, in proportion to the exercise and improvement of them, will all societies, whether *civil* or *religious*, thrive and flourish. This is seen by experience, and in lower degrees, at *present*; but will more fully appear in the other world, where the *knowledge* and *love* of the saints are made perfect.

Seet. I. AS TO KNOWLEDGE; this lies at the bottom of a rational and true devotion, or of the acceptable

* See Dr. Watts's lyric poem, inscribed to the Rev. Mr. Howe.

acceptable homage and obedience of reasonable creatures, and is the foundation of our happiness in the enjoyment of God, the best of beings. The more we know Him, the better we shall love Him: And when once our knowledge is made perfect, (I mean, fully answerable to our capacity, and yet, in all probability, still growing, still improving,) it will lay a noble and lasting foundation for the work of praise, and the exercises of love; for contemplation, devotion, and action; and for all those offices of religion and friendship, that can any way constitute and compleat the happiness of heaven. — The knowledge of the saints in that happy world, shall be vastly improved, as to the *manner* and *measure* of it. They shall know both *more* and *greater* things, and after a more excellent manner. The mind will be filled according to the extent of its faculties, and freed from darkness and error. — We, at present, know but little, and *see through a glass darkly*. The *distance* is great, and the *medium* imperfect, and we see hardly any thing fully or truly. But there our faculties shall be strengthened, and our knowledge improved. It shall be more copious and extensive, more distinct and certain, and at the same time fully satisfactory. We shall know what we desire to know; and be able to seek and find the truth, without the uneasiness of painful enquiry or suspense. We shall see it with *clear evidence* and *full conviction*, and *securely* embrace it, without mistake, or the mixture of error with it. — What full satisfaction
and

and pleasure will this afford, and how delightful is the prospect of such a state! — Through the defects of present knowledge, the natural weakness of our minds, and the diversity of our understandings, there are different ways of *worship*, and more different ways of *thinking* in the world: But, O the desirable and happy unity of the saints in those brighter regions above! — And from whence does their mutual happiness in a great measure arise? Is it not originally founded in light and knowledge; in their clearer views, and more exalted apprehensions of God and divine things? This will enrich the mind, improve and bless the understanding, and advance their felicity in the enjoyment of God, and one another.

Seet. II. ESPECIALLY if we add to this, (what must here be understood to accompany it,) perfect LOVE and CHARITY. The one will be improved as much as the other, and both together will make up the happiness of heaven, as a church, or holy society. This, perhaps, will have the greatest weight and influence. All our knowledge, exclusive of it, is vain and insufficient to true happiness; and heaven itself, (if I may so speak,) would be no heaven without it. Love is the immediate spring of all active holiness or obedience; and our greatest knowledge can add nothing to our happiness but in conjunction with it; but both together, and in perfection, will make it compleat. — The KNOWLEDGE of the blessed will be so far from diminishing

nishing their love, that it will supply it with fresh matter, and minister to its everlasting exercise: This is the proper *food* and sustenance of souls. — And a LOVE that is supported and heightened by the knowledge and contemplation of divine truth, as it is always the most rational in itself, so it affords the most exalted pleasure. This is the enjoyment and rest of the saints, the chief complexion of a holy soul, and the main ingredient of happiness.

OUR *charity* in this world is very narrow and defective, as well as our *knowledge*: Pride and envy, and the selfish passions too often mingle with it, and by this means, the happiness of *others* does too often diminish and spoil *our own*. Its allays and clogs are many, and render it very imperfect at best; but there it will be refined and exalted, freed from all impurity and dross, and improved into a bright and vigorous flame. Heaven is a world of *charity* and *love*, its proper region and element: There it will be pure and perfect, and no where else; nor is there one soul in heaven, that is not moulded and framed according to the laws of perfect love and charity. The apostle observes, when speaking of some *graces*, and *gifts* in the primitive church, that they are confined in their use, and limited to the present world; but that *charity never faileth*: It runs into the other world, where it will have full scope and perfect exercise, be diffused through the whole soul, and fill every faculty, and last through the ages of eternity. ---

This

— This, indeed, is what eminently suits the heavenly state, and is a necessary qualification of every subject there, without which he could not be happy, nor find any entertainment in the presence of God, or the society of saints and angels. Nay, such is the constitution of the human mind, that it is impossible to be happy without benevolence and love; nor can we be perfectly happy whilst there is any defect, either in our love to God, or to *one another*.

Sect. III. Now, our love to God, in the first place, will be perfected in heaven, and render us perfectly happy in the enjoyment of him.— Knowledge is the *ground* of love, as I said before, and the first thing necessarily supposed to the happiness of intelligent creatures: But love is the *immediate spring* of all true enjoyment, of all true happiness, in the knowledge or possession of any good whatsoever. — And this will be made perfect in the light of another world. It will terminate upon the blessed God, the most amiable and deserving object, and be exercised in the most pure and exalted manner. It may be truly said here, “ *He that loveth not, knoweth not GOD.*” * Knowledge is as necessary to the love of God, as to the love of our neighbour. — And when we come to *see Him as He is*, without a vail, and beholding Him face to face, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, we shall then love him to the utmost of our capacity; and the more we love him, the

* 1 John ii. 8.

better we shall serve him, and the higher will our joys arise.

THE love of GOD is the noblest spring of devotion, of the most pure, rational, and exalted devotion. It is rightly esteemed the most effectual principle, and the most eminent and comprehensive branch of practical religion, and is therefore called, with a great deal of reason, by our blessed LORD, the *first and great commandment*, and by the apostle, the *fulfilling of the law* *, it being the spring, rise, and rule of all our love and duty towards our neighbour, and of all that homage and obedience we owe to the blessed GOD. It is so *now*, and so it will be in *heaven*. It is in the exercises of love, supported and animated by faith and hope in this world, that we have any enjoyment of GOD at present: And when once those preparatory graces are laid aside as useless, and we arrive at the world of full light and full possession, our consummate happiness in the enjoyment of Him will commence, and consist in the exercise of pure and perfect love. — In a word, this will, no doubt, be one of the most eminent graces in heaven: Or rather, it is so *essential*, so *important*, that without it there can be no such state at all. This is the noblest exercise and pleasure of the saints in proportion to their attainments in true piety: And, as it comprehends much of our *duty* and *happiness* here, so it will be no small part of our *heaven* hereafter.

* Rom. xiii. 6.

Seet. IV. AND the same may be said of our love to MEN, and to the SAINTS, especially, who bear the image of GOD. This shall likewise be made perfect in heaven, and render us perfectly happy in the enjoyment of one another. We plainly see the great excellence and usefulness of this virtue, even in its present imperfect state, and that nothing has a more happy influence upon society, or contributes more to the peace and comfort of our own minds. Next to the love of GOD, is the love of our *neighbour*. This is the foundation of all our mutual duties, and the proper guard of them. True charity may be fitly stiled, the *law of kindness*, the bond of unity. It excludes wrath and anger, defamation and reproach, all unreasonable jealousies and suspicions; and studies every thing that is just, generous, and grateful. It regulates and improves good-nature, sweetens the temper, and renders it sociable and friendly. It makes and restores peace, prevents and heals differences, and causes a general circulation of all kind and good offices, which are the defence, ornament, and comfort of society. — And particularly, I would observe, that it prompts every man to *please his neighbour for his good to edification*, notwithstanding some little differences in opinion and judgment.

Now, if such is the nature and general tendency of charity, such its influence upon civil and religious societies of men in this world, how

great must be the felicity, peace, and harmony of the saints above, where charity will have its perfect exercise, and there shall be no defect or languor in it? We can seldom keep it alive or active long together. Such is the opposition it meets with, and so much uncertainty and weakness attends the exercise of it in the present life, that its influence and success in the *world*, and in the *church*, is oftentimes very little. — But, when once the spirits of the just are made perfect, their love and charity will be predominant, and come up to the meaning and extent of the precept which requires us to *love our neighbour as ourselves*. — Our kindred-spirits, and fellow-saints will be happy in us, and we in them. We shall see more of the divine image in them than ever we saw before, or perhaps were willing to allow. Their holiness and virtue will appear unsullied, and be vastly improved; and we (bearing the same resemblance ourselves) shall be able and disposed to love them in the most sincere and intense manner, in conformity to the nature, and in obedience to the will of GOD *. Not one spirit there is unlovely, or unbeloved. What

* In heaven, (says the truly honourable Mr. Boyle,) our, on both sides, compleated graces, will not only deserve, but allow a higher strain of friendship. The near contemplation and fruition of the infinitely transcendent perfections of the Creator, keeping all our kindness to the creatures, not only subordinate to the love we owe to GOD, but grounded on it; as excited needles, when they stick fastest to each other, owe their union to their having both been touched by the load-stone; to which they have therefore both of them stronger inclinations, than either to the other. *Seraph. Love, Sect. 23.*

a delightful correspondence must this make? How happy the souls that are made perfect in *love*, perfect in all moral and divine excellencies? They *dwell in GOD*, and *GOD in them*. * Love is their element and delight. They *dwell in love*; and they live in *peace*; and the *GOD of love and peace is with them*: He is the *center* and the *spring* of all their happiness.

It may be of use to dwell a little upon this thought; to consider the happy influence of *mutual* love, or how far the exercise of it in that state, may be supposed to encrease and perfect their social happiness in the enjoyment of one another.—Man is made for society; and it is charity that must make it pleasant and profitable, both to ourselves and others.—Now, the charity of the saints in heaven will lie in a suitable and high esteem of one another, as divested of all present weaknesses. We shall view all the members of that blessed community in the most amiable light, and in a state of perfection, and shall consequently behold them with inward approbation and delight. Nothing, (says one,) diverts or damps our love more in the present state, than that our brethren do not *appear*, to us at least, worthy of it; one hath this blemish and infirmity, another a different one, (real or supposed, and the effect is the same, whether it be the one or the other,) and hence shyness, distance, and coldness arise.—But there we shall see them faultless, without spot and blemish; shall have

* 1 John iv. 16.

no objection to their character, nor any suspicion of their sincerity; and every one may perceive what a foundation is hereby laid for all the mutual endearments of heaven.—Their charity hereupon will express itself in an entire benevolence and good-will to all the inhabitants of that world, and heartily rejoice in their welfare and happiness. *The joy of one will be the joy of them all.*—And, which is the life and pleasure of society here on earth, that which gives it its chief relish, their charity will, no doubt, dispose them to mutual converse, and friendly intercourse. What will be the particular subjects, or the manner of it we cannot certainly say; but may reasonably conclude that this *will* not, *cannot* be wanting in heaven, where there is the most agreeable and perfect society. — And, what will very much distinguish and advance their happiness is, a complacency and satisfaction, even in the superior happiness of their brethren, which is oftentimes the greatest trial of our charity in this world: *The spirit that is in us lusteth to envy* *. But every saint above will wish well to his neighbour as to himself; nor will the perfections and honours of some, (which will doubtless be different in degree,) raise any envious or detracting thoughts in the breasts of others. There will, no doubt, be a variety amongst them, but charity will make them all easy in that variety. “The highest *seraph* will not
 “despise the lowest class of spirits, because they
 “cannot rise up to his notes, and do not burn

* Jam. iv. 5.

“ with

“ with his zeal ;” nor will the lowest faint there envy those above him, or suffer any uneasiness, any diminution of his own happiness, on *their* account. The charity of heaven will make all its inhabitants easy and pleased with the state of things about them, and will consequently dispose them to an entire harmony and concord amongst themselves. It is a just and useful remark, that, “ Was our charity here rectified
 “ and compleat, nothing in this world could
 “ much annoy us: Perfect charity would make
 “ an advantage, even of the weaknesses and infirmities of others: In heaven it will be perfect, and consequently will enable the soul
 “ to feast upon all the excellencies and varieties
 “ of that state.” — All animosities and jars will there cease, and the names of infamy and reproach be heard no more. Envy, malice, and strife, and all uncharitableness, are eternal strangers in that calm and peaceful abode. Every thing that offends or defiles, that tempts or grieves, shall be for ever removed out of that kingdom. Our little angry disputes, which oftentimes work so much ill to ourselves and others in this life, shall have no place there. Universal benevolence runs through the whole kingdom. We shall neither provoke those we converse with, nor injure those we converse about. There are no offences given, nor are any taken in that world of love. No divided opinions, no party-quarrels, no seeds of discord are sown in heaven;

and the noise of war and controversy ceases for ever.

Sect. V. AND thus, when I consider the love of GOD, and the love of our fellow-creatures, as made perfect in heaven, it is easy to conceive that the happiness of the saints above must be great and transcendent, far beyond any thing we can conceive at present. O, the joys of heavenly and seraphick love! How unspeakable the happiness of that world, where *divine* and *brotherly* love are both made perfect! These are eminent branches of the divine nature. All holiness is summ'd up in the love of GOD, and of our fellow-creatures, and in the delightful exercise of it; and this is the foundation of our happiness in the enjoyment of GOD, and of *one another*. Holiness is made perfect in heaven, because love is perfected there.—Man was made for love; to love GOD, and to love his neighbour. This reduceth the soul to its *first state*, its original rectitude, and fills it with an inward complacency and satisfaction. A soul of this complexion finds itself calm and easy, as being in its right temper, and what it was designed to be according to the laws of its creation. Its temper and motions are regular and divine, and consequently comfortable and peaceful. It is said of the righteous, when they leave this world, that they *enter into peace*, for they immediately enter upon that world where love is made perfect. True love is productive of peace: It banishes from the mind all uneasy and turbulent passions, and

and frees it from all the present instruments of its disquietude and torture; and it introduces hereupon a joyful serenity, the peace of GOD, or a divine peace within, that passeth all understanding. The fruit of *love*, its immediate and genuine fruit, is *peace* and *joy*. It is so in proportion to the improvement and degree of it in this life; but in the heavenly state where love is made perfect, it will be constant peace and everlasting joy, without any mixture of uneasiness or sorrow; and this is joy and peace in perfection.

Sect. VI. AND now, if we lay all this together, it will help us to form an idea of heaven, as a state of perfection, and entirely fitted for a full happiness. PERFECT KNOWLEDGE and PERFECT LOVE, make spirits happy: And both will have place in heaven, how defective or weak soever they are at present. — There are many things, both within us and without us, that forbid the perfection of our joys in this world. The difficulties of the mind, and the disquietudes of the soul, are many; but when our *knowledge* and *love* are made *perfect*, our joys will be so too; so numerous, — so immense, — that we shall *need*, (as well as *have*,) an eternity itself to taste them fully.

THE satisfactions that will arise from a PERFECTION of *knowledge* in the future state are inconceivably great. All that perplexing darkness that here surrounds our purblind understandings will vanish at the dawning of that
bright

bright and eternal day.—The knowledge of GOD and the LAMB, v. g. will be no small part of our happiness there. How great a satisfaction it must be, to *see GOD*, and how much of our future happiness will consist in that *beatifick vision*, (as the school-men justly call it,) *St. John* hath taught us, when he says, that we shall be *like Him, because we shall see Him as He is* *. It is the character of all sincere christians, that they *love an unseen saviour*, that they esteem him above all things in this world, and rejoice in the prospect of being with Him, *absent from the body, and present with the LORD*. This, at least, is their *prevailing temper*, and their *delightful frame* at some seasons; but when they see Him *as He is*, they will love Him more, and rejoice with a joy much more *unspeakable and full of glory*; or, when *his glory is revealed*, they shall be *glad with exceeding joy*. Now, what an improved pleasure and satisfaction must it be, to see GOD himself who is *original love*, and *Jesus* his son who is *love incarnate*, in the light and glory of the upper world? No shadow of darkness, or melancholly gloom, shall ever arise in those regions; for the lamb is the light thereof, and the countenance of GOD, like the sun in its highest strength, shall shine and smile on all the blessed inhabitants.—Besides, we shall there be better acquainted with all other objects of knowledge that are any ways fitted to advance our happiness. All those sublime and more difficult points of

* 1 John iii. 2.

revelation and faith which now puzzle and divide learned men, shall be cleared up as far as we have any interest in them. We shall better understand the obscurer passages of sacred *writ*, and the *wisdom* of God in all his works. Those difficulties which have often exercised (and perhaps distressed) our faith in this world, shall be fully resolved; nor shall we be ignorant of any thing that is fit for us to know, or that concerns our happiness, in that exalted and perfect state.

AND the satisfactions that will arise from PERFECT *love*, are equally great and inconceivable. There will be a fund of *knowledge* to feed and encrease the fire of *love* in every breast.—The saints above, as they know God, so they find and feel that they *love* Him, and are *beloved* by Him. As they *see* the Lord Christ, and are present with Him, so they *love* Him with the warmest affection, and have the sweetest and most delightful *sense* of *His* love. They not only love the Saviour, but are beloved by Him; or the love is *reciprocal*; there is a *mutual expression* and *sense of love* on both sides.—And oh! what tongue can express, what heart conceive the sacred pleasure that fills every soul in heaven under the immediate impressions of divine love! What unknown and endless satisfactions must arise from a full assurance of the love of God and the *Redeemer*, and from the undoubted and lively sense of it shed abroad in the heart! This is the spring of all their joys, that *chrystal stream* which flows from the *throne*
of

of God and the Lamb, and bleſſeth all the inhabitants of that world with its divine refreshments.—They ſhall love *one another* alſo with a pure heart *ſervently* : *brotherly* love ſhall be *mutual* and *ſtrong* on both ſides. This follows upon the other, and both are nearly connected. Having a fuller knowledge of God, and *themſelves*, and their *fellow-ſpirits*, and a clearer diſcernment of thoſe things in which they at preſent *differ*, they ſhall be perfectly united in love and affection one to another. Some will doubtleſs know more, and ſee farther into the ways and works of God than others ; but they will all ſee things in the ſame clear unerring light, and with a perfect agreement, ſo far as their *capacity* and *knowledge* extends*. This, doubtleſs, will be one ground or reaſon of their perfect

* It is no way inconſiſtent with the notion of heaven, as a ſtate of perfection, to ſuppoſe a difference and encrease of knowledge there. When the ſaints above are capable of more knowledge, they have more ; but they always have what at preſent, and at that inſtant they are capable of ; and in this ſenſe their knowledge will be always perfect, as it will be fully answerable to their capacity. It is not neceſſary to ſuppoſe, that every ſaint ſhall know as much as the angels, or that all the ſaints ſhall be of equal ſize, and have like meaſures of knowledge. As *one ſtar differs from another ſtar in glory*, ſo ſhall one ſaint differ from another. All the veſſels of glory, (to uſe a common ſimilitude,) ſhall be *full*, though all are not equally *capacious*. He that gathered much of the *manna* in the wilderneſs had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack, and ſo it ſhall be here.—That the ſaints above *know* more, *i. e.* grow more perfect, is owing to the enlargement of their faculties : An acceſſion or increaſe of knowledge, therefore, will not infer any imperfection in their *preſent* happineſs.

union

union amongst themselves, as well as moral rectitude, or likeness of temper. We are now commanded, to be of *one accord, of one mind*, and to have *the same love* one to another *. But, how little soever we find of this at present, it will be the happy attainment of the saints in heaven. All will be calm in the regions of the blessed: They will *keep the unity of the spirit, in the bonds of love*: and have a perfect *harmony* amongst them, partly arising from greater measures of *light*, and partly from a fullness of divine *charity* and *love*.

Now, consider this, O my soul, and raise thy desires and wishes towards heaven. Is there nothing in that land of *light* and *love*, to invite thy longings, and awaken thy desires? Is not heaven, in this view, (if I may so express it,) the *paradise* of the creation, the seat of happiness? And shall I still cleave to this earth, where ignorance and iniquity so much abound, and the infirmities of the saints, the people of GOD, are so many? Shall the members of the christian church be always easy and contented in such a situation as this; and never raise their thoughts or wishes towards heaven, the state above, which is all perfection and blessedness? — Let me now rise in the exercises of faith and hope, and view the inhabitants of that world. How much are they advanced in knowledge and love, in peace and joy, in every excellence of nature, and in every divine privilege, above all their fellow-

* Phil. ii. 2.

saints here on earth ? They were once cloathed with bodies of flesh, and laboured under manifold defects and great disorders ; but are now made perfect ; perfectly free from their old complaints and former weakneses ; and perfectly happy in the encrease of knowledge, and exercises of love, and in all those unrivaled blessings that spring from both. How happy is it for the saints in heaven, where both these are made perfect ? — Their *knowledge*, v. g. shall never decay, or wax old, but be always full and satisfactory. — And, through the length of their immortality, there shall not be the least interruption of the sweet intercourse of *love*, on God's side, or on theirs ; or of the *love* which they bear to one another.

THIS, now, is a short, but faint and low description of the future blessedness. — It is reserved amongst the prerogatives of our *being in* heaven, to know how happy we shall be, *when* there. *It does not yet appear*, says the apostle, *what we shall be* : And what the scriptures have revealed in this matter, seems rather meant to quicken our obedience, than satisfy our curiosity. But, methinks, there is enough, abundantly enough, in this *imperfect* draught, and *distant* view of it, to satisfy the rational mind *at present*, and to excite an ardent desire after it. What, though we cannot conceive how great the happiness of heaven is ; it may nevertheless suffice us to know, that the happiness of the saints will be *finished* and *complete*, that the state above is *all perfection*,

perfection, and will leave out every thing which at present clogs and enfeebles us. All clouds in the mind, and damps in the affections, whatever narrows the understanding, or fetters the soul, shall cease for ever. O desirable and happy state!

Sect. VII. SHALL I carry this pleasing contemplation still further, even to that more perfect and consummate state of happiness, which shall take place in the church triumphant, after the general resurrection and final judgment, when the saints in both worlds, or the whole invifible church of GOD amongst men in every age, shall meet together in full assembly, and worship GOD and the Lamb together.—This is that *new Jerusalem, the city of the living GOD*, to which we are now *come*, and have some affinity or relation, under the gospel state. All true christians are *beirs* of it, or they belong to it by promise and initiation. Hence the *Gospel-church* is called the *kingdom of heaven*, or the *heavenly Jerusalem*; and *St. Paul* reckons all the saints to be but *one family*, both in *heaven* and in *earth* *. And what a mighty accession it must be to their happiness, when they shall all unite in one *general assembly*, the author to the *Hebrews* very clearly intimates †, and we may in some measure conceive at present.—Christians have some communion with the saints departed, even in this life. They are following the good examples, imitating the faith and pa-

* Ephes. iii. 5.

† Heb. xii. 22, &c.

tience,

tience, and other virtues, of those that are gone before them, and are praying to GOD daily, *that his kingdom may come.* They are *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of GOD,* and their *conversation is in heaven.*— But when they come to mount Zion, and are adjoined to that *innumerable assembly* there, their happiness will be great and *transcendent* beyond expression, and their communion and converse be improved to the utmost. The spirits of the faithful, in every age, that have long waited for the *redemption* of their *bodies,* shall then be made perfect in a higher sense than ever. It is said, in the scriptures, of *Noah, Asa* and *Job,* that they were *perfect* men, perfect or upright in their generation: It is also said of the *spirits* of these, and other *just* men, that they are now *made perfect* in heaven: but their consummate happiness and perfection will not commence till after the resurrection, when body and soul shall be *re-united,* and shine in immortal vigour and beauty: To which it may be added, that their perfect *union* to their common head, and their mutual *communion* with each other, will, by a blessed circulation, make the happiness of heaven complete and perfect.

How desirable a period must this be! when the redeemed of the LORD shall be brought home, out of every land; when all the saints, thus made perfect, in every age, shall finally meet and never part! *The redeemed of the Lord shall*

shall come to Zion with songs.—And, with what transport shall I behold such a multitude without number, the saints of *antient*, and of *later* times, all made perfect, all happy and glorious! what a noble and wondrous assembly? What an amazing and blissful society of human souls, gathered from various nations, and from all ages, and joined together in the *heavenly Jerusalem*, the *family* of GOD above! — Heaven shall be replenished from all quarters of the world, with *Jews* and *Gentiles*, for GOD is no *respector of persons*: *The Jerusalem which is above*, (or from above,) is *free*, which is the *mother of us all**: Or that *Jerusalem* which cometh down from heaven, the gospel-church, takes in *both*, and the church triumphant will take in *all*, i. e. all in every age and nation, that *fear GOD*, and *work righteousness*: The *gospel-salvation* extends to all such, and they are fitted to receive it, though they are not all favoured with a *gospel-revelation* and *ministry*.—The *gospel of Christ* comes from heaven, and it leads to heaven; and the state of the church under the gospel, is therefore called by the *evangelists*, the *kingdom of heaven*, it being erected by the *Holy Ghost*, and published to the world by the *son of GOD*, who came from heaven.-----And, as this gospel was first preached at *Jerusalem*, and from thence went into all other parts, the gospel or christian-church, is further stiled the *heavenly JERUSALEM*, or the *Jerusalem which is ABOVE*,

* Gal. iv. 26.

and the *mother* of all other churches *-----To which I may add, that as this church was first established upon the most catholic principles, and designed to free mankind from every *yoke of bondage*, so it is excellently calculated for being an *universal church* †, and carries in it a most forcible argument for universal charity.

WHEN

* “As at *Antioch* the christian name, so at *Jerusalem* the christian church, first began.—How proud, (says one,) had *Rome* been, if either of these had happened in that city? If the gospel had been first preached, or the disciples first called Christians there. They would immediately have cried out *mother-church*. This would have been *demonstration* for their sham *supremacy* over all other churches. But as truly as *Eve* was the mother of all living, *Jerusalem* appears to be the mother of all churches. There *Peter* preached his first sermon; there he made his first converts, and founded the first church, that is, the first congregation of faithful people. And this is what even they who compliment *Rome* with this affected supremacy, are themselves forced to acknowledge; and we too, are willing enough to allow her the title of mother, in such sense as the scriptures have done it before us, that is to say, the *mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth;*” Rev. xvii. 5. Dr. Grosvenor.

† NOTHING is more fitted than the christian religion for turning the world into an *œcumenical* church. It may be co-extended with natural religion, being an harmonious superstructure upon it, and capable of being diffused through all nations. It makes no difference of *people, tribes, or nations*. It has no institutes but what may be observed in one country as well as another. It appoints no long and tedious pilgrimages to *Jerusalem* or *Antioch*, to *Rome* or *Mecca*; but allows to all the solemnities of religion in their own country. It meddles not with the frames and models of civil government; but leaves them as it finds them, suitable to the law of nature, and to the genius and welfare of the people

WHEN I consider what multitudes, of different climates, and different sentiments, shall finally meet, and join in the worship of the new *Jerusalem*; that many, for instance, who have lived under the *Jewish dispensation*, having observed the law of *Moses*, and waited for the *consolation of Israel*; that many likewise, who have seen the *Messiah*, and believed in *Jesus of Nazareth*; and that many of each sort, who, it may be, could not agree in their worship and sentiments here on earth, shall one day unite in perfect *knowledge* and *charity*; what kindly impressions, and favourable sentiments, should this inspire? — Nay, when I further consider, that many also who have lived under the *law of nature*, shall be joined together with them, as *Enoch*, and *Noah*, *Melchizedech*, and *Job*, *Abraham*, and the *patriarchs*; and that many *shall come*, (as our Saviour tells us,) *from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and shall sit down with these in the kingdom of G O D*; how justly may the thought and prospect of this upbraid our narrow and defective charity? How much shame and dishonour does it reflect upon

people, to which they belong: None were ever deprived of their dominions to make room for it. — It forbids tumult and sedition, and requires order and subjection. — Besides, there are catholic bands of union that may be common to all nations, one *body*, one *spirit*, one *Lord*, one *faith*, one *baptism*, and the like. And there is a catholic disposition to unite the members of the church together, were it as large as the world, *œcumenical love* and charity. See *Relig. of Jesus delineated*, Sect. 31. p. 143.

Q 2

Christians,

Christians, especially, who have no more charity one for another? — Multitudes will appear, no doubt, in that blessed assembly, contrary to all expectations concerning them, and to the wonder and joy of all about them. They lived, perhaps, many of them, in the darker times and ages of the world; or they laboured under great disadvantages for improvement, under much ignorance and manifold prejudices; their light and assistance was very little; but *there* their honest and upright minds shall be enlightened, they shall be better acquainted with the manifold wisdom of God, and look into divine things for their farther improvement and satisfaction. All points of present difference shall there be set in the clearest light; and they shall likewise see, that the things about which they differed, were not of such moment and necessity as they were ready to imagine. We shall, no question, wonder at our former *ignorance*; and much more, at our former *rashness* and *presumption*. This, methinks, should teach us to make *sincerity* the only test of religion; and not to be too forward or positive in determining against the sincerity of our fellow-*christians*, where there is no other evidence of the want of it, than their not acknowledging the truth or importance of every favourite notion of ours. Persons, at present, think differently, and attend the worship of God in different places: but, if they are upright and peaceable, this will be no bar to their admission into the temple of God above. This will be the *center of unity* to all that in every age, and in every

every place, fear GOD, and believe in his son Jesus. There *his servants shall serve him* *, with the greatest purity, and in perfect harmony.

AND now, to close all, since there will be such a perfect harmony among the inhabitants both of earth and heaven, what pity is it that there should be so great a discord now?—If we cannot *receive*, and *judge* of things, all alike, this should be no *obstruction*, but rather a stronger *argument* for the exercise of mutual charity †, and should excite our longing desires after that state where *knowledge* and *love* are both made perfect. How ardently should we now breath after this state of perfection, and join together in our prayers to GOD, that his *kingdom* may *come*, even, the kingdom of glory, where *we*, together with all the saints, both *quick* and *dead*, shall have our perfect consummation and blifs, both in *body* and *soul*, in his eternal and everlasting glory? ----- In a word, let us pray,

* Rev. xxii. 3.

† There is not, (as one observes,) a greater absurdity and inconsistency in the world than that of a certain church, that pretends to an higher conduct of the spirit of GOD than any of its neighbours, so as to entitle him to all their decisions about religion; and yet the same body of men breath nothing but destruction and cruelty, write their decrees and laws in blood, and enforce them by an inquisition; the methods of which are a reproach to the human nature. It is strange they should have the spirit of infallibility, and be so little acquainted with the spirit of holiness and peace; and methinks, it is pity the spirit should communicate *so much light*, (as they vainly pretend,) and *so little love* to them.

that

that amidst all our different opinions and attainments in religion, we may be taught of GOD to *love* one another; always remembering, that such a temper is of the greatest use in the christian life, and absolutely necessary to the *being* of a christian. *G O D is love, and he that loveth is born of G O D.* In kindness, love, and benevolence, we resemble GOD more than in any thing else: Hereby we are *perfect*, as our *father who is in heaven is perfect*. Such a temper is not only agreeable to the original and genuine principles of human nature, but of the greatest account in the *New-Testament* *: This is the *end* which the gospel refers to, and aims at; and the whole scheme of its religion is calculated to promote such a temper as this in its professors. What is all our *knowledge* and *faith*, (or even all our *religion*,) unless it be crowned with *brotherly-kindness* and *charity* †? It was the character of the *Thessalonians*, that their *faith* grew exceedingly, and the *charity* of every one of them, towards each other, abounded ‡. O, when shall this be more visible in all the churches of Christ? Let us *pray for the peace*, and *seek the good of Jerusalem* all our days, by the exercise and improvement of this heavenly temper.

N O W, the G O D of patience and consolation, grant us to be like-minded one to-

* 1 Cor. viii. 1.

† 2 Pet. i. 7.

‡ 2 Thess.

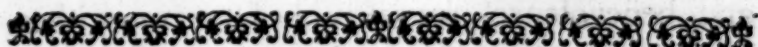
i. 3.

wards

APPENDIX.

231

wards another, according to Christ Jesus :
That we may, with one mind, and one
mouth, glorify G O D, even the father of
our Lord Jesus Christ*. And the G O D
of peace be with us all. Amen.



A N

H Y M N, by another Hand.

(H E B. XII. Ver. 18, &c.)

I.

NO T to the terrors of the L O R D,
The tempest, fire, and smoke ;
Not to the thunder of that word,
Which G O D on Sinai spoke.

II.

But we are come to Zion's hill,
The city of our G O D,
Where milder words declare his will,
And spread his love abroad.

* Rom. xv. 5, 6, 33.

III.

III.

Behold th' innumerable host
 Of *angels* cloath'd in light;
 Behold the *spirits of the just*,
 Whose faith is turn'd to fight.

IV.

Behold the bless'd *assembly* there,
 Whose names are writ in heaven;
 And God, the judge of all, declares
 Their vilest sins forgiv'n.

V.

The saints on earth, and all the dead,
 But one communion make;
 All join in *Christ* their living head,
 And of his grace partake.

VI.

In such society as this
 My weary soul would rest:
 The man that dwells where *Jesus* is,
 Must be for ever bless'd.

29 MR 59

F I N I S.



**BOOKS printed for JOHN NOON, at the White
Hart near Mercer's Chapel, Cheapside.**

- I. **A** Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Colossians, Philippians, and Hebrews: after the Manner of Mr. LOCKE. To which are annex'd, Several critical Dissertations on particular Texts of Scripture. By the late Reverend Mr. JAMES PIERCE of Exon. The second Edition. price 16 s.
- II. A Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation of St. John; with large Historical Observations, and a Preface giving an Account of the Design and Use of this Book; with a Scheme and Order of the Prophecies. By MOSES LOWMAN. price 9 s.
- III. A Paraphrase with Notes on the Revelation of St. John, in the Manner of Dr. CLARKE; with a Preface concerning the Usefulness and Intelligibleness of that Book. By THOMAS PYLE. M. A. Prebendary of the Cathedral Church of Salisbury. price 4 s
- IV. A Paraphrase on the seven Catholick Epistles: after the Manner of Dr. CLARKE on the four Evangelists. Useful for Families. price 3 s. 6 d.
- V. A Paraphrase and critical Commentary on the Prophecy of Joel. By SAMUEL CHANDLER. price 4 s.
- VI. The curious and useful Sermons, of the Reverend Mr. JAMES FOSTER. The fourth Edition, 2 Vol. 8vo, price 10 s.
- VII. The same Gentleman's Defence of the Usefulness, Truth, and Excellency of the Christian Revelation in answer to Christianity as old as the Creation. 3d Edition. price 5 s.
- VIII. His three Letters to Dr. Stebbing on the Subject of Heresy. 2d Edition. price 2 6 d.
- IX. A free and impartial Study of the Holy Scriptures recommended: In three Vols. 8vo. Containing, Notes on many peculiar Texts of Scripture, and Discourses on various Subjects. by JOSEPH HALLETT Junior.
- X. The Laws and Liberties of the Gospel: or, The Duties and Privileges common to all Christians explain'd and recommended in several practical Discourses. Designed to promote Christian Truth and Charity, Peace and Unity. By GILBERT MICHELL, M. A. Rector of Bredfall near Derby. Price 5 s.
- XI. Eight Sermons preached on several Occasions. By the late Mr. JAMES BURROUGHS. Price 3 s. 6 d.
- XII. Fifteen Sermons on several Occasions. To which is added, a Scripture Catechism, or the Principles of the Christian Religion laid down in the Words of the Bible. By the late Reverend Mr. JAMES PIERCE. Price 5 s.
- XIII. Funeral Discourses: In two Parts. Containig, 1. Consolations on the Death of our Friends. 2. Preparations for our own Death. By WILLIAM HARRIS, D. D. Price 5 s.

XIV. A Treatise of Human Nature; being an Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into moral Subjects: Wherein the Nature of the Understanding and Passions is examined and explained. In two Volumes Octavo. Price 10 s.

Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire quæ velis, & quæ sentias dicere licet. Tacit.

XV. The Philosophical Grammar; being a View of the present State of experimented Physiology, or Natural Philosophy. By B. MARTIN. The second Edition, with large Additions. Price 6 s.

XVI. The young Student's Memorial Book; or Pocket Library of the Mathematicks. By B. MARTIN. Price 3 s.

XVII. A new and universal System, or Body of Decimal Arithmetick; containing its Doctrine, Application and Use, in all the Parts of Arithmetick, Mathematicks, &c. By B. MARTIN. Price 6 s.

XVIII. The young Trigonometer's Complete Guide, being plain and spherical Trigonometry made plain and easy. By ENJAMIN MARTIN, Teacher of the Mathematicks, in 2 Vol. Octavo. Price 10 s.

XIX. The Elements of all Geometry. By B. MARTIN. Price 6 s.

XX. Novatiani Opera, cum copiosissimis Observationibus & Notis, in quibus totum argumentum auctoris de Regula Fidei ex veterum Patrum Monumentis latè discutitur. Præmittitur Dissertatio de Filii Dei Homœousio, sive Coessentialitate uni Deo Patri. Studio JOHANNIS JACKSON, Eccles. Angl. Præsb. Price 7 s.

XXI. A second Edition, of a Defence of Human Liberty, in answer to the principal Arguments which have been alledged against it, and particularly to CATO's Letters on that Subject. To which is added a Vindication of Human Liberty: In answer to a Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity; Written by A. C. Esq; By JOHN JACKSON Rector of Rossington in the County of York, and Master of Wigton's Hospital in Leicester. Price 4 s. 6 d.

XXII. CYROPÆDIA: or, the Institution of CYRUS, concerning Religion and Government. Translated from the Greek Original of XENOPHON, by the late honourable MAURICE ASHLEY, Esq; (Brother to the late Earl of SHAFTSBURY.) Address'd to the Lady ELIZABETH HARRIS, in a Dissertation upon the true Liberty of thinking in Matters both Ecclesiastical and Civil. By the Translator. In two Vol. 8vo. price 9 s.

XXIII. The History of the SEVARAMBIANS, a People of the South-Continent: In five Parts. Containing an Account of the Government, Laws, Religion, Manners, and Language of that Nation. Translated from the Memoirs of Captain SIDEN, who liv'd near fifteen Years amongst them. price 5 s.

XXIV. ALKIBLA. A Dissertation upon Worshipping towards the East: In two Parts. By WILLIAM ASPLIN, M. A. price 3 s.

XXV. The Nature and Design of Christianity consider'd: In two Discourses. By THOMAS BOTT, M. A. Rector of Shipwell near Norwich. price 3 s 6d.

XXVI. The late Reverend Mr. Platts's Discourses on the Mystery of Godliness. 2 s. 6 d.

XXVII. An Essay towards explaining the History and Revelation of Scripture in their several Periods. To which is added, a Dissertation on the Fall of Man. By JEREMIAH HUNT, D. D. PR. 4 s.

XXVIII. A Translation of Dr. Whitby's Latin Treatise of Original Sin; by Heymood. 4 s.

XXIX. The useful Sermons of John Orr, M. A. Rector of a parish in the Diocese of Leighlin, in Ireland. 5 s.

XXX. The Second Edition, with considerable Alterations and Additions, of A Practical Grammar of the Greek Tongue; wherein all the Rules are expressed in English; those necessary to be got by Heart, made the Text; others immediately subjoined in the form of Notes. The whole established upon rational Principles, supported by Classical Authorities, and considered, as to Method and Length, with all Convenience to the LEARNER.

With a VOCABULARY of such Particulars as could not well be disposed into the Body of the Grammar. To which is added, a rational Scheme of RHETORIC. Price 6 s.

XXXI. *Praxis Grammatica* to the Greek. Price 2 s.

XXXII. *In the Press and speedily will be published, the second Edition, of A practical Grammar of the Latin Tongue; in the same Method and Form, and by the same Author as the above Greek Grammar.*

XXXIII. The fourth Edition, with very large Additions and Improvements, of The Negociator's Magazine, or the most authentic Account yet published, of the Moneys, Weights, and Measures of the principal Places of Trade in the World; their Conformity to the English and Dutch Weights and Measures, and Variety of useful Remarks thereon. The Course of Exchange, plain and necessary Rules to cast them up by, the Laws and Customs thereof, the Advantages to be made by them, and how; and the Nature and Use of simple and compound Arbitrations. To which are added, Curious Calculations, of great Use in the West-India, Carolina, and New-England Trades; and Tables shewing the intrinsic Value of any foreign Gold or Silver Coin. All of great Use to Merchants and Traders, and entirely necessary to those who would understand Merchants Accompts. By Richard Hayes. PR. 6 s.

XXXIV. Human Osteogeny explained, in two Lectures read in the Anatomical Theatre of the Surgeons of London. In which not only the Beginning and gradual Increase of the Bones of human Fœtus's are described, but also the Nature of Ossification is considered; and the general Notion, that all Bones are formed from Cartilages, is demonstrated to be a Mistake. By ROBERT NESBITT,

M. D. Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and of the Royal Society, and Reader of Anatomy at Surgeons-Hall. Pr. 6 s.

XXXV. *Anatomy Epitomized and Illustrated: Containing, 1. A concise and plain Description of all the Parts of the Human Body; together with their various Uses in the Animal Oeconomy. 2. A large and choice Collection of Sculptures, exhibiting a just Idea of the Figure, Size, Situation, Connection, and Uses of the several Parts of the Body, in seventeen Folio Copper-plates. By M. N. B. A. Price 6 s.*

XXXVI. *The Sun standing still in the Days of Joshua, rationally accounted for. By ABR. OAKES, LL. D.*

XXXVII. *The Sacramental Worthiness: or, the Church of England's Doctrine relating to that Worthiness, which she holds necessary to an effectual partaking of the Lord's Supper, explained. By ABR. OAKES. LL. D. Price 6 d.*

XXXVIII. *The plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, vindicated from the Misrepresentations and false Reasonings of Richard Warren, D. D. and particularly from his abusive Charge of Socinianism; in Remarks on the three Parts of his Answer to that Book, and also on his Appendix. By ABR. OAKES. LL. D. Price 2 s. 6 d.*

XXXIX. *The Doctrine of Hell-Torments distinctly and impartially discussed. The second Edition. To which is prefixed, a Preface inscribed to the Reverend WILLIAM WHISTON, M. A. concerning his Eternity of Hell-Torments considered. By ABR. OAKES, LL. D.*

XL. *The Argument à priori concerning the Existence and Perfections of God, and its Importance to Virtue and True Religion, stated and consider'd. Together with the Difficulties and Objections which have any where occurred; particularly in a Dissertation, by a learned Hand, at the End of Mr. Law's Treatise of Space, &c. Price 1 s.*

29 ME 59
XLI. *A Discourse concerning Virtue and Religion: Occasioned by some late Writings. pr. 6 d. The two last writ by one Author.*

XLII. *Just Published, A Dissertation on the Civil Government of the Hebrews. In which the true Designs and Nature of their Government are explain'd. The Justice, Wisdom and Goodness of the Mosaical Constitutions, are vindicated: In particular, from some late, unfair and false Representations of them in the Moral Philosopher. By MOSES LOWMAN.*

XLIII. *The Principles of Moral Philosophy. An Enquiry into the wise and good Government of the moral World. In which the Continuance of good Administration; and due Care about Virtue for ever, is inferr'd from present Order in all Things, in that part chiefly where Virtue is concerned. By GEORGE TURNBULL, LL. D.*

XLIV. *Speedily will be published, Christian Philosophy: or the Christian Doctrine concerning Providence, Virtue, and a future State, proved to be perfectly agreeable to the Principles of Moral Philosophy.*